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ants, owing to evils for Darby think of a more economically

exist, some of it, but many of were already k it on himself rens — a purpose Thoreau would en-

ant, The Times Literary Supplement

Protestantism: while the Protestants made a similar mistake, fought like the Catholics and the Pope". It's hard to tell if this is indictment, or one more expression of his self-loathing.

Belligerents on both sides saw them no less ludicrously mislabeled. Carleton's other standard type, the "Yankee", becoming obsolete when he took to the sea to record their traits and customs. The one that endeared him to the Young Americans was Davis, who believed the

The energy and resourcefulness of the characters are disarming; and occasionally we are struck by the sharpness of their perceptions and their relevance to the present. But the novel's treatment of its characters and their consequences is naturalistic and deterministic, but he was conscious of it, and he was not the less. There's a marvellous chapter on the subject of Valentine *M'Cluskey* in which the author writes:

genous language of  
any instances it was  
Shirley's store of  
pungency to his  
habit of transli-  
ngme very peculiar

of stock ingredients  
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innocent romantic  
desire for revenge on  
insidious injustice, de-

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imperfectly acquired.  
Gaelic expressions contri-  
fiction, though his anno-  
teratinn has produced  
renderings of them.  
*Traits and Stories* is full  
which were later elaborated  
temporary frustration of a  
attachment, an obsessive of  
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to face with his  
men start off by  
out before long  
. By the end of  
y, willy nilly,  
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Protestant convert comes face to face with his Catholic counterpart. Both are now defending their new religions, and there is a subtle shift in positions occurring. The argument each has reverted to is the original faith. The ex-Oran-

anderings and comic roguery of "Authenticity" was the one me-  
 claimed for himself, and you find  
 over in his details of social life;  
 ever, extend to his plots, which o-  
 al too much to the popular "sens-

erves credit for his Irish country verness and all; with a n he might have , as certain critics three types of Eng-

Carleton, however, does not attempt to transcribe a single letter, and the resulting text is a little more circumspect than the original brought it off. His fiction is a little more pointed out, contain-



الحمد لله



## In the presence of the great

Pearl K. Bell

FREDERIC PROKOSCH  
Voices: A Memoir  
345pp. Faber. £8.95.  
0571 131379  
The Asiatiques  
382pp. Faber. £3.25.  
0571 131999

Why a single literary career can encompass both dazzling renown and bleak obscurity is always perplexing, especially when the energy and imaginative adventurousness of the writer in question have rarely flagged, and he has been able, in the course of a long and dedicated life, to produce a large body of serious work. When the American novelist Frederic Prokosch was still in his twenties, he achieved the kind of success with his first book, *The Asiatiques*, that is ordinarily only the stuff of a young writer's fantasy. Such eminences as Thomas Mann and André Gide hailed the novel as a masterpiece, an astounding feat of narrative invention, and when, two years later, Prokosch published *The Seven Who Flew*, the praise was no less unqualified. What intrigued the critics as much as the elegance and verve of Prokosch's style and the minutely described landscape in both books was the fact that the novelist had

nuggets of philosophy, critical judgment, whimsy, malice, pretension and terror they were unfailingly willing to pour, with scarcely any prompting, into the ears of this attentive listener. Not a word, it would seem, has been forgotten; as he remarks at one point, "I suffer from a mildy which is called 'total recall'." A zealous traveller, he has been everywhere and known everyone. In adolescence he was privy to the lofty pontifications of Thomas Mann and the polyglot arabesques of Pavlova; they were friends of his father, an eminent philologist, and his mother, a concert pianist. On a visit to Paris during his college years, he did not hesitate to go round to the Rue de Fleury and "pay an idolatrous visit" to Miss Stein and Miss Toklas, who treated him to tea and quirky judgments. On his way to a squash match in Hartford, young Prokosch naturally dropped in on Wallace Stevens at his insurance office, and he has remembered every golden word.

At times Prokosch's unerring ability to divine the presence of the great and the near-great in unexpected places can strain credulity, and one begins to feel a strong craving for the non-celebrity, the obscure. He has only to swim out to a volcanic isle off Capri, and the next voice he hears is Alberto Moravia's, grandly dismissing Hemingway. Who should sit down next to Prokosch on the terrace of a

actuality - though it is precisely such detail that makes his portraits of others so lively. When he describes his life as "a journey in search of the artist as a hero, as an enigma, as a martyr, as a revelation, and finally as a fragment of humanity", the words are too vague to express anything worth knowing about the man or the writer. When he writes about his longing "for some distant and faceless and passionate fulfillment", about his lifelong search for the "hidden pattern in my existence", he conveys little beyond a sweet tooth for romantic *Schwärmeret*. Rapture does not fill up the empty spaces left by hollow generalities. Listening to Isaac Dinesen one day, he felt "that she was peering into the core of my unremembered past - not my real, factual past but my lost and oceanic past." In *Voices*, to his credit, Prokosch has not let himself be sucked into such mystic waters: when a writer abandons there for the oceanic, he often drowns. But Prokosch's novels have been influenced by dreamy notions about a vague and irrecoverable past.

It is this dreaminess - of tone and temperament - which may provide a clue to the fate of his reputation. As a novelist, Frederic Prokosch has been drawn much more strongly to the elegant convolutions of imagined landscape, imagined people, imagined wars and political conspiracies, than to the visible and



"The Widow's Son of Nahn", 1931, by Eric Gill: reproduced from *The Engravings of Eric Gill* (545pp, Christopher Skelton, Skelton's Press, Castle Street, Wellington, Northamptonshire NN8 1LW. £10. 0 9303226 3 6), which will be reviewed in a subsequent issue of the TLS.

never been anywhere near Asia. The geography he rendered with such confidence and exhilarated concreteness, as his picaresque hero wanders through Lebanon and Tiflis, Trebizond and Badrapur, Persia and Malaya, was a triumph of imaginative bravura. Years later, lunching with E. M. Forster in Cambridge, Prokosch was delighted with the Master's judgment: "Your book is much too poetic to have been based on vulgar tourism."

In the four decades that followed this astonishing success in the 1930s, Prokosch published fourteen other novels, four volumes of poetry, and translations of Euripides, Hölderlin, and the sixteenth-century French poet Louise Labé. Some of the novels published during the Second World War sold better than they were reviewed, but Prokosch's reputation went into inexplicable eclipse during the post-war years, and his most recent works of fiction - dealing with such widely disparate subjects as Mogul India, a mythical pilgrimage across America, and Lord Byron - went more or less unnoticed.

Frederic Prokosch has now written a sort of autobiography called *Voices*, and one turns to it in the hope of unravelling the puzzle of fame and indifference. Perhaps the most touching thing about the memoir is its total lack of bitterness or rancour about his displacement in the literary firmament. Indeed, he alludes to the unpredictability of literary glory only once, and with such subtle indirection that the point is easily missed. As he grew older, he writes, "I avoided cliques and coteries, I refrained from interviews and conferences, I eluded doctores and manifestoes. I shrank from everything that indicated, however faintly, on my idealism. . . I grew increasingly puzzled by the change in current values, which allowed the purest rubbish to pass as a meaningful achievement."

There are not many writers who would so serenely forego the chance to brood on the fickleness of fame. Instead, Prokosch has chosen to recollect his life mainly as a series of encounters with the great writers and artists he has known (and at times pursued with rather sedating audacity) and the beautifully wrought

Venetian hotel but Marc Chagall, helpfully full of "old Hebraic cunning . . . and old Hebraic sorrow"? But if these fortuitous encounters, yielding such a constant harvest of articulate wisdom, after a while seem too worshipful, and less remembered than made up, other voices provide moments of brilliantly sly comedy. At Cambridge, where Prokosch did a year of graduate work in medieval literature, he was invited to tea at the Leavises', where the nutters scrutinizer and his equally high-minded wife fed each other their lines in a literary vaudeville turn as hilarious as it was unwitting. "How do we feel about Virginia, dear?" asked Professor Leavis. "We have accepted Virginia Woolf", Queenie Leavis replied.

Meeting Cyril Connolly again after the war, Prokosch observes that "His eyes had grown shifty and his voice had grown circumspect, as though alarmed by the thought of an impending bagality." The portrait of Auden, who keeps turning up in these pages like a decaying spectre, is on the whole so devastating that one would suspect some spiteful malice behind it: were Prokosch not the generous and compassionate man, altogether free of vengeful emotion, that he reveals himself to be in this memoir. Prokosch revered Auden the poet, "puffed" that self-induced and self-perpetuating Auden unhappiness", deplored his inhuman arrogance, and tolerated his sadistic mockery with near-masochistic placidity. But as he recounts the gradual disintegration of the man in his later years, "almost regal in his massive, drunken misery", it is difficult not to abate the sorrow he felt for his one-time hero. The Auden here remembered is unbearable, though it is not at all clear that Prokosch intended the portrait to be this harsh.

It is clear, however, that Prokosch has attempted to do more with this autobiography than just render the sound and sense (and non-sense) of remembered voices. Though he reveals nothing about his private life, he is devoted to the kind of abstraction that is supposed to convey a sense of artistic purpose, larger and grander than the mundane detail of

coherent configurations of reality. In this sense he is something of an exquisite despite the melodrama and violence that are often essential to his narratives. The fiercely imagined Asia of *The Asiatiques* (now republished) becomes a geographical hallucination in which the picaresque narrator, along with the novelist, can float with unhindered freedom. The nameless young American hero is almost always on the move, never coming to a halt long enough to acquire a face or any other symptoms of tangible individuality, or long enough to provide us with a plausible reason for his nomadic wanderings in the East. As one exotic place after another unreels and is soon left behind, the novel begins to seem as synthetic as a Fitzpatrick travelogue ("As we did farewell to beautiful . . ."). Unable to discover any reason for the hero's presence here there and everywhere, a reader can find no reason for his being there either.

Even when we are given perfectly good reasons for the wandering, fleeing, escaping, running that are so characteristic of Prokosch's fiction, there is often some mystery left unpenetrated and unexplained, even in his novels about the Second World War, where he sometimes seemed to be straining too hard to reconcile the very different demands of poetic fantasy and gritty realism. In *The Age of Thunder*, for example, we end up with a pseudo-allegorical mist that does justice neither to the war action nor to the novelist's fantasy. And this neither quality may have had much to do with the decline in reputation. When war and the damage of war are all too real and recent, one becomes impatient with poetized vagueness about military missions. Even the elegance of Prokosch's language may have struck critics and readers alike as self-indulgent, an embarrassment of metaphorical richness devoid of a human centre and moral persuasion. It took a memoir written in his late seventies to reveal Prokosch's shrewd and sharply realistic gift for portraits drawn from the life, while in all those novels there is rarely a face we remember.

## Refining the divine definer

Henry Chadwick

A. M. TILLARD  
The Bishop of Rome  
Translated by John de Sotgé  
342pp. SPCK. £6.50.  
0201040303

This rigorous, at times polemical and throughout passionate study by a brilliant French Dominican touches one of the most sensitive points in the Christian ecumenical dialogue between divided Churches. J. M. R. Tillard is among the best-informed of Roman Catholic participants and has inevitably had to suffer the burden of incomprehending officials who do not share his prophetic vision. But he is not one of those ecumenists who like things vague and easy. His book is precision-instrument stuff. He conforms in the minutest respect with the requirement that in ecumenical conversation there can be no dilutions, no discreet silences. His book would have delighted Newman and Strauss. Though the book concedes nothing much to the Gallican view of the superiority of general councils to popes, Bossuet and even the Anglican John Bramhall would have thought the author remarkably close to the kingdom. The translation is excellent.

Yet Fr Tillard is writing to clarify the doctrine of the Roman primacy, which Paul VI

bravely acknowledged to be the largest obstacle in the path to reconciliation. It follows that some things in this book will surprise and alarm both conservative papalists and vehement Protestants: the former by pointing out how little justification there is for a maximal and exclusive interpretation of the definitions of the first Vatican Council of 1870, the latter by pulling the rug from under their established, entrenched stone of opposition. At a time when Roman Catholic theologians strongly interested in papal infallibility are few, and fewer still would be happy to sit an examination on its meaning, this is a book for which non-Roman Catholics will be grateful. For all ecumenists it must be prescribed reading.

Among the ecclesial bodies that have come to be separated from Rome, the small print of Roman primacy is a deep ravine to those who would dearly like to see the barriers to catholic communion dismantled but then meet the doctrine that normal communion with Rome is possible on condition of submission to the centralized administration of the Curia. The focus of universal communion is available to those also willing to accept ordinary universal jurisdiction and the imposition of a large measure of uniformity. Or is it possible to be united without also being absorbed? Could communion be restored between Rome and Canterbury without Rome demanding the right to nominate to the see of Durham?

### Sendings

The wave in its endlessly-gliding  
Nave, its travelling church, mowing  
Over and over, as new;  
The long flume of the blow-hole cave,  
Like the flume of a force that explodes at the cave's back;  
The blow-hole like a great dark horse  
Lying down among the wet black rocks and snorting  
Having galloped across the ocean

Sending its long plumes out of the cliff-top blow-hole,

The nostrils of a horse that has run the ocean-course  
And rests leaning on the land, with panting ribs;

The long flume of the ocean-pail,  
The broadcast waves beating into the small cliff-speaker  
Gasping with the noise that is white  
With so many salt messages;

The back-track of waves that charge the cliff-mouth,  
Flowering path;

These are the great lives with lights blazing;

The lean land lined with creamy fat;  
And the great tanks of oil dragged in,  
The tankers, with lights blazing,  
The Christmas-looking ships  
Hauled in by the little dark pilots,  
Each a Christmas sled blazing with brightly-wrapped gifts  
Pulled along jingling light by night-reindeers;  
Oil is light to the land and warm  
As gifts are light and warmth to the mind of the child;

What is the spectre in the drinking-water -  
Jack beating his wife on the ceiling  
As the sun strikes the bedside glass  
That trembles as I drink;

There is a long flume out of the doorway of the concert-hall  
And the music beating from the lighted cave,  
There is a slow glissando with the wooden side of the cello bow  
Like the stuttering of a great match against its box;

The blow-hole pluming on the campus horizon,  
And passengers leaning over the lighted taffrail  
Like brightly-wrapped presents,  
Passengers coming in like water,  
And flowing out of the harbour lights as the tide does,  
Pouring on to the gangways laughing and crying,  
The ghostships ahning over the waves  
Streaming with the salt dew denser  
On the cool iron of gangway and gantry.  
The long flume out of the sea like a bomb  
Like a storm, like a broadcast foaming like rams of wool.

PETER REDGROVE

Fr Tillard's implied suggestion is that the rising spirit of independence within the Roman Catholic Church, not merely in America (much publicized recently) but also in Africa and Asia, makes it advisable for administration to be more decentralized if the bond of universal communion is not to be strained; and it is this bond, not centralized government, which is the classical and prime function of Rome. His book is therefore concerned not merely with the ecumenical movement but with the shape of Roman Catholicism fifty years from now. It is part of his argument that the opportunity presented to the Roman Church by the ecumenical programme of the second Vatican Council asks for a shift in emphasis and structure that is needed for internal reasons anyway.

The first Vatican Council declared that ex cathedra papal definitions on faith and morals are to be received as possessed of that infallibility with which Christ willed to endow his Church, and are irrefragable in their own right apart from the consensus of the Church. The last phrase may be taken to deny the opposite formula (that the consent of the Church is necessary) expressed in the Gallican articles of 1682; but the phrase could also be taken to mean that a ruling by the Pope is infallible, within this special range of topics and when speaking with extreme solemnity, whatever any or all of the other bishops may believe or say. The latter interpretation was what Dupanloup heard as the opinion of Manning. In justification of Manning it may be urged that the force of the clause "apart from (or irrespective of) the consensus of the Church" must be more than merely a negation of a seventeenth-century Gallican formula. Gallicanism in 1870 was in deep recession. Vatican I had more important things to do, one would suppose, than to flog a sick or even moribund horse. The momentous clause was hastily added to the text at the very last moment, and its ambiguities can hardly have been considered. It was not intended to please the minority at the Council.

It is, for example, unclear how one should interpret the term "consensus". On a purely juridical view there is no difficulty: is, if it means that after the bishop of Rome has taken into account "the witness of holy scripture, the decisions of general councils and the rulings of his own predecessors", and has then given a solemn definition on faith and morals, there is no necessity for the expansive rubber stamp of a general council to impart final legitimacy and additional authority to his judgment. Subsequent consent is unnecessary if there is antecedent and concomitant consent. And yet the text of the definition does not say that consonance with scripture or general councils is a necessary condition, only that this is historically what past Popes have sought to preserve. In 1870 Pius IX's belief that by virtue of his office he was himself a complete embodiment of "tradition", and his remonstrances with anti-infallibilists for their opposition to "any dogma", did much to make the friendliest observers give a far more extensive significance to the controversial clause.

To Orthodox and Anglican theologians the definition's isolation of the Pope apart from the universal episcopate seemed to offer cover for the view (to them dangerous and close to formal heresy) that the bishop of Rome is not first among his brethren but belongs to a different realm of ministerial order. They interpreted Vatican I to mean, not that there may be special and rare occasions when, as primate of the universal Church and successor of Peter and Paul, the bishop of Rome is granted a charism of protection from error in judgment, a gift which, though undelimited, in a richer and wider sense first inheres in the entire company of the faithful, but rather that "by divine right" the Pope is to be reckoned as the major and continuingly inerrant organ through which an all too human Church, normally prone to limitless error, is granted its one living guarantee of abiding in the truth. At Vatican I the spokesman for the *Daplatto de Fide*, Bishop Gasser, disavowed this interpretation when presenting the final text. But something uncomfortably like the latter view became a popular Roman Catholic response to the definition, and supporters of a maximalist exegesis were felt to be more fervently loyal to the successor of Peter or indeed (as some said) the

"vicar of God". To the natural reason it somehow seems easier to envisage one person being kept from error than the body of the faithful. Large assemblies of bishops look vulnerable to faction and emotional excitement. Had not the conciliar movement of the fifteenth century failed and thereby bequeathed the choice between Reformation and Ultramontanism?

In Fr Tillard's book there is a repeated insistence that the text of Vatican I has both to be interpreted in the light of the discussions at the time shown in the Acts of the Council, and also to be "reread" in the light of Vatican II. The voice of the substantial minority at Vatican I became that of the majority at Vatican II. Vatican I said too little about the authority of the Pope inhering in his presidency of the college of bishops, gave no hint of any conceivable limits to the absolutism of jurisdiction and teaching authority other than those inherent in natural and divine law and seemed to make each local bishop merely the curate or deputy of the bishop of Rome with only so much pastoral power and authority as the Pope might be pleased to grant. In 1875 the German bishops had to explain to Bismarck that Vatican I made no change in the Pope's relation to the episcopate, namely to ensure that each bishop fulfil his proper duty. They vigorously denied that the Council had made him an absolute sovereign. Vatican II said nothing in Vatican I, but added the affirmation that each local bishop and the collective body of bishops have a direct divine commission for their pastoral tasks. In "collegiality" Vatican II sought a middle road between monarchy and democracy.

There are moments in Fr Tillard's book when the old Sorbonne theologians' phrase "a monarchy tempered by an aristocracy" seems not far below the surface. But Gallicanism he repeatedly dismisses as a mere spectre long exorcized. The heart of his contention seems to lie in the proposition that the correcting balance of Vatican II over against Vatican I needs to be taken further; more power needs to be restored to national conferences of bishops; and too intense a concentration of authority in one man, though congenial to modern media (interested in local bishops mainly when they say something faintly embarrassing), must be disadvantageous in a world-wide body.

Fr Tillard will of course have none of the opinion that the papacy is an optional extra in Catholicism. With impassioned eloquence he wants to commend it perhaps especially (but not only) to Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran friends. Substantially he sympathizes with the view, so congenial to Orthodox and Anglicanism, that reception by the faithful of a definition is distinct from submission and mere obedience. To say so much is at once to draw ninety per cent of the sting of "papal infallibility" as commonly regarded by theologians outside the Roman Communion. He also quotes with evident assent an observation made at Vatican I by Bishop Ketteler of Mainz that to confer on the Pope an ordinary and immediate jurisdiction over all the churches and all the faithful is to give him an impracticable task.

At Vatican II the council put aside a draft schema asserting the body of Christ to be simply identical with the Roman Catholic Church, and replaced "is" by "subsists in". Rivers of ink have flowed from this change. Moreover, the decree on ecumenism of 1964 acknowledged with generosity not only the Orthodox Churches but also the mainstream Reformation bodies as media of salvation in Christ, though lacking certain marks of catholicity especially in ministerial order. Fr Tillard urges that the Roman Catholic Church cannot acknowledge that degree of true faith among separated ecclesial communions without also being willing to listen to some of the things they have to say, especially when they look at the papacy and see in the language of Vatican I an obstacle compared with which the north face of the Elger looks easy. He is not urging his brother Catholics to think Orthodox or even Anglican critics (of the utmost benevolence) right at all points, but rather to be willing themselves to reread their own documents and to consider if they cannot go out to meet Christian communions who may deeply long to celebrate with them the sacrament of our redemption but are deterred by what looks absolutist and too little tolerant of legitimate liberty. Nevertheless, some will not readily visualize the Roman Congregation for Sacred Doctrine listening to







# Persons and pre-persons

Mary Warnock

MICHAEL TOOLEY  
Abortion and Infanticide  
441pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £20.  
019246749

Philosophy is more and more closely involved with the real world these days. The notion, so totally abhorrent in the 1950s, that philosophers should help people to make good decisions, should even tell them what to do, is now generally accepted; and philosophers are in demand everywhere, to put their expertise to practical use. But there are dangers in this. People may expect too much of the subject. They may demand proof, or absolutely conclusive argument, that this decision or that is the right one. Michael Tooley is aware of this danger; and though, in the end, he is prepared to make recommendations within the fashionable topic he has chosen, he realizes that many people do not really understand what philosophers are up to, when they seek to justify conclusions. He therefore starts his book with a general account of Ethics, and the kinds of arguments and strategies characteristically deployed by moral philosophers. This is a useful and sensible starting-point.

His own position is that there may be some primary or basic moral principles incapable of justification by argument (and different people may hold different principles to be basic). These principles will be held with the full force of moral feeling, and other principles will be justified by reference to them. But appeals to moral feeling, or intuition, though by no means to be disregarded, are always to be critically examined. For sometimes what is claimed as an intuitive moral truth may turn out, on examination, not to be basic, perhaps because it is incompatible with some other, more fundamental, principle. Tooley's practice, therefore, is always to pay attention to people's claimed intuitions, but to test them against other intuitions, or even by reference to their consequences, to see whether or not they are as important as at first appeared. This approach, though not theoretically tidy, and though difficult to classify (is he a Utilitarian or some other sort of Consequentialist? Is he, in the end, an intuitionist?) is extremely sensible, given that he is examining an issue as emotionally charged as the one he has chosen. Intuitions are two-a-penny in the field of abortion, to say nothing of infanticide.

It would be futile to attempt a summary of Tooley's book. It is of a density comparable only to Aristotle, though of a very different kind. Every recent argument for and against every proposition he asserts is examined in detail. If someone needs to defend a position, any position, on an abortion or infanticide, he would be well advised to take Tooley's book with him, and look up the various arguments in the index, before embarking on his case. He would then be prepared to handle all objections. Or nearly all.

Tooley's arguments on abortion, leading to the conclusion that abortion may be justified, turn, first, on the proposition that membership of the species *homo sapiens* is in itself no reason for preservation; secondly, on the proposition that while it is wrong and, in his words, seriously wrong, to kill persons, it is not therefore necessarily wrong to kill potential persons. For what makes it wrong to kill persons is that they actually possess certain characteristics which make them "enduring subjects of non-monetary interests". The possession of these features by the victim is the "wrong-making" characteristic of the act of killing. Embryos and fetuses do not possess these features, and therefore it is not wrong to kill them. Among the relevant features which they do not possess are a sense of their own identity over time, and the capacity to experience pleasure and pain.

Similar, and related, arguments are advanced with regard to infanticide; and this is admirable, whether or not the arguments are wholly persuasive, for philosophers in the past have been prone to offer infanticide, "the murdering of innocent babies", as the type of all obviously morally outrageous acts, such that no one but a moral monster could perpetrate them. But we know quite well that infanticide has been practised in the past, and by

people not otherwise morally beyond the pale; and that it is widely practised now, for example in China; and, more important, that those conscientious paediatricians in this country who decide, in consultation with the parents, to give up the struggle to keep alive severely damaged neonates are liable to be accused of infanticide—even charged with it in court. It is therefore of the utmost importance that philosophical arguments relating to infanticide should be critically examined, abhorrent though the word itself may be.

Tooley's argument follows the same course as his argument with regard to abortion: it is seriously wrong to kill a person, but very young babies, especially premature babies, are not persons, because they do not have the person-making features of high mental capacity, or the capacity to recognize their own continuing existence over time. Thus, according to Tooley, anyone who regards the destruction of neonates to be intrinsically wrong would have to produce new criteria by which to distinguish a person from a non-person. (He has, incidentally, a long and complex set of arguments in which he considers the relative wrongness of killing and allowing to die.)

I would take issue with Tooley on two re-

lated points. First, I do not see why he asserts that membership of the species *homo sapiens* is irrelevant to the question whether fetuses or neonates should be kept alive. I would not suggest that human fetuses or human neonates should always be kept alive; but I would argue that their membership of the species *homo sapiens* is what makes us feel that they are worthy of special treatment, and that, therefore, arguments must always be provided (such as that their destruction would benefit the generation of other humans) to justify their destruction. That being a member of a certain species is a biological fact does not, in my view, make it an irrelevant basis for moral argument.

Second, I am not convinced that, in arguing about the right treatment of embryos, fetuses or neonates, the deployment of the concept "person" is helpful. In particular, I am not sure that being a person is something dependent on the possession of certain empirically discernible features. Locke held that the term "person" was a forensic term; and I am inclined to think that he was almost right.

This does not, of course, entail that lawyers would employ the category whimsically. To be deemed a person might in fact always go along with possessing certain characteristics, to be

factually ascertained. Nevertheless, if we think of personhood as something we ascribe to certain creatures, and not to others, then whether or not something is to be thought of as a person is no easier to determine than whether or not we should respect him enough to preserve his life in all circumstances. The two questions are answered together; and the answer to both will, in my view, start (though not finish) with the consideration whether or not he is a member of the species *homo sapiens*. I do so, in short, believe that to use the notion of personhood as a justification for preserving life, and non-personhood as a justification for taking it, advances the argument in any degree.

These, then, are some of the issues discussed in Tooley's monumental book. They are of the utmost interest and importance. But it cannot be said that his book is a good read. It is quite simply too long. There is something admirable in his detailed examination of every argument for and against every position. But there would also be something admirable, though less easy to define, in writing a book on the subject that was of the right length. This book is of the wrong length. That is, however, an intuitive judgment, and I am not prepared even to attempt to justify it.

## Distribution of goods

Jeremy Waldron

MICHAEL WALZER  
Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality  
345pp. Oxford: Martin Robertson. £15.  
0855206837

There are, we are told, some things that money can't buy; and many of us think that there are other things that money should not be able to buy. Political office is a good example: bribing electors is prohibited and there are laws about how much money may be used to promote a political candidate; because we want office distributed on some basis other than individual or corporate wealth. But other proposals to limit the purchasing power of the pound in your pocket are more controversial. Should money be able to buy preferential medical care? Should a wealthy parent be permitted to procure a superior education and therefore better career prospects for his children? Or (to take a less well-known example) in wartime should conscripts have the right to pay 300 dollars for a substitute to do their military service for them (as American citizens were permitted to do by the 1863 Enrollment and Conscription Act)?

Negative answers to these questions may be justified in two ways. Perhaps the distribution of money in society is itself so unjust that it would be outrageous to allow it to determine the distribution of these other burdens and benefits as well. That line of argument leaves open the possibility that we would be prepared to countenance the purchase of political office, health care, education, draft exemption; and so on. If wealth and income were distributed more justly. However, in some or all of these areas, we may have a much stronger objection in principle to allowing money to talk. We may insist, for example, that money and political office are simply different sorts of thing and they should have different rules for their distribution. Justice in the distribution of money is one thing; justice in the distribution of political office quite another; and the trouble with allowing political posts to be bought is that it permits the former distributive principle to invade and dominate what ought to be the autonomous realm of the latter.

In theoretical discussions of distributive justice, we face an array of slogans such as "To each according to his needs", "To each according to his deserts", "To each an equal share", and so on. It often seems as though we have to opt for just one of these at the expense of all the others. But the examples we have been looking at may indicate that this is a mistake. In different spheres of life and for different goods, different formulas will be appropriate. Justice is a matter of discerning the appropriate distributive principle for each sphere, and it is a matter of patrolling their boundaries to see that the various principles do not encroach on one another's territory, and that no one good becomes dominant over all the rest.

This is the first and most important conclusion of Michael Walzer's new book, *Spheres of Justice*. Professor Walzer suggests that it has been ignored in much recent philosophical writing on justice. Philosophers in their search for some unity of principle underlying the diverse circumstances of human life have tended to neglect the variety of human goods; they assume that all goods are commensurable and convertible, and so they try to reduce them to a short list of basic goods whose distribution can be governed by a small set of very abstract principles. Thus, for example, egalitarians are led to argue, implausibly, for equality across the board in relation to all sorts of goods; because they fear that an inequality anywhere is liable to be converted into inequality everywhere once goods start being exchanged. Walzer, on the other hand, is interested in the containment and isolation of particular inequalities, by specifying limits on convertibility so that inequalities cannot breed and multiply in this way.

Each chapter of *Spheres of Justice* is devoted to a different problem of distribution—the distribution of membership in a society (immigration and citizenship), welfare and security, money and commodities, political office, hard and dangerous work, education, leisure, recognition and esteem, and (curiously) divine grace and love. If he is right in his main arguments, each of these problems deserves a book—nay, a philosophical controversy—of its own. But in the space he allows himself, Walzer's discussions display a rare sensitivity to the uniqueness of each problem: they are stimulating and imaginative in a way which lives up to the high expectations aroused by his earlier writings in political philosophy.

The same, however, cannot be said about his more abstract argument. Suppose we agree that different principles of justice are appropriate to different areas of life. It does not follow that this distributive pluralism is theoretically irreducible. On the contrary, pluralism at the level of the distribution of particular goods may be the result of applying one or two very abstract and fundamental principles to a variety of human circumstances. Much of the most useful and interesting recent work in the theory of distribution has had this character. John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* is the most prominent example. Rawls uses the fundamental but very abstract principle of equality embodied in his "Original Position" construction to generate various layers of derivative principles to govern the particular classes of good. The first layer comprises Rawls's two principles of justice: his fairness. They concern only the most basic political and economic structure of the just society. Their application in turn explains and generates further and more concrete precepts of justice to cover the distribution of things like money, health, education, and so on, in particular circumstances. Now the fact that the distribution of all these goods is ulti-

mately generated by the same abstract principle does not mean that all goods are regarded as commensurable. On the contrary, the derivation of the subordinate precepts may at the same time indicate reasons for limiting convertibility or for establishing priority relations among them. This is a possibility that Walzer seems to ignore.

One senses throughout this book a certain hostility to the very idea of abstract argument in political philosophy (something which may well explain its rapturous reception in certain circles in North America). The shift away from the abstract approach contributes two important features to Walzer's discussion. The first is a matter of style: Walzer illustrates the book, as he did his earlier work, *Just and Unjust Wars*, with a large number of historical examples. The American conscription procedure, which I mentioned earlier, is one, and there are dozens of others. These illustrations are always interesting, often helpful, and seldom distracting.

A second more substantial feature is connected with this. Walzer is convinced that justice, in each particular sphere, is "relative to social meanings". This means first, and negatively, that we are not to assume that justice is the same for all societies and across all times and places. But second, and positively, it indicates the basis on which the appropriate principle of distribution is derived for each particular good: it is to be the principle suggested by the shared understanding of the good in question in the particular society. The way the good is thought of in the society gives us a "logic" for its distribution. This works quite well for things like public office and military service; but applied to other goods such as health care and education, Walzer's approach is less convincing. It is not clear that each society has a shared understanding of these goods: often the social meaning of a good (health care for example) is a matter of controversy between different social groups. (Paradoxically, then, Walzer's pluralistic conception of justice is least applicable in a pluralistic society!)

Walzer recognizes this difficulty, but he does not seem to accept what follows from it: namely, that his approach tackles the problem of resolving these disagreements from almost exactly the wrong end. But anyway, do we really want to accept that justice in distributions is nothing more than conformity to the logic of established social understandings? Surely that is too uncritical a principle for assessing the distribution of, say, political power or emergency medical care in certain societies. My hunch is that we may in the end want to step about this approach what Walzer says about other abstract principles of justice: that it may be plausible in the case of certain goods, but that it is acceptable in the case of all others.

## Confrontations in the Caribbean

Edward Kamau Brathwaite

MICHAEL CRATON  
Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies  
30pp. Cornell University Press. £25.  
080412528

Growing up in Barbados in the 1930s and 40s, a descendant of slavery, I never learnt about it in school, in the street, or in my home. This conspiracy of silence was compounded by the "history" we were taught, which began with the "discovery" of the island by the noble Englishman in the name of King James I, who planted his sword as a cross in the ritual manner of the spot where a plinth now stands, a confused account of Royalists, Roundheads and Redlegs, and the news that these whites, together with labour from Africa, co-operated in the production of sugar. And then the great leap forward into the nineteenth century but to the 1830s and the "struggle" for political independence. Even at Cambridge in the 1950s it wasn't much better. In between my bemusement at M. M. Postan and the "open field system", I dared to ask what my tutor thought of Eric Williams and C. L. R. James. The impression I received was that they were not historians in any seriously acceptable sense: Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) was a "polemic", and wasn't *The Black Jacobins* (1938) a novel? I mention all this to indicate how far we have travelled from the colonial half of the present century. Not only have Williams's and James's books appeared in several editions in paperback but no serious bibliography of twentieth-century thought at Cambridge or elsewhere could be without them. And in the Caribbean not only are we now (most of us) proud and conscious of our (slave) history and seeking ways to learn more about it, but we are, I think, beginning to place it in emotional and intellectual perspective.

In *Testing the Chains* Michael Craton turns to the issue of slave revolt—a crucial area, because one of the reasons why we suppressed consciousness of slavery in Barbados was not only that the island was "Little England", but because the idea had been subtly and subliminally conveyed that slavery was the result of some (black) aboriginal sin and that we had somehow confessed our "guilt". In never having tried to break the chains that bound us. If we did not know that in 1816 there were rebels called Bussa and Nanny Grigg holding out along the Congo Road, how could we possibly know and be heartened by the 300 years of Maroon independence in Jamaica, or by the knowledge that brothers and sisters on the island they renamed Haiti had fought—and won—not just a revolt, but a war against Napoleon, establishing the first (and only) ex-slave free state in history?

Professor Craton does not tell us much about Haiti, which is a pity and one of the real weaknesses of a book that is, on its own terms, careful and comprehensive. It is concerned with slave revolts in the British Caribbean from Barbados and the Bahamas through Jamaica and the Eastern Antilles to Trinidad, Tobago and mainland Guyana. He even provides a "Chronology of Resistance, 1638-1837", though he expands his comments, if not his scholarship, past 1865 to make certain controversial remarks about the present. But the narrative of the book unfolds from Afro-American and Maroon resistance in the early part of the Caribbean slave period (1600-1775), into an increasingly "creole" and more complex phase during the "Age of Revolution", and ends most valuably with a detailed look at the three revolts that weakened the system so systematically that the planters were forced to hold on and look anxiously back towards the metropole: Barbados 1816, Demerara 1823, and Jamaica 1831-32.

What *Testing the Chains* limits itself too much to not asking the questions that arise from the descriptions of revolt it so admirably presents. The questions are: why (obvious) did the slaves revolt? Because they wanted freedom, and, more important, how, both spiritually and materially, did they so continuously and so successfully overcome adverse conditions, though they expended his comments, if not his scholarship, past 1865 to make certain controversial remarks about the present. But the narrative of the book unfolds from Afro-American and Maroon resistance in the early part of the Caribbean slave period (1600-1775), into an increasingly "creole" and more complex phase during the "Age of Revolution", and ends most valuably with a detailed look at the three revolts that weakened the system so systematically that the planters were forced to hold on and look anxiously back towards the metropole: Barbados 1816, Demerara 1823, and Jamaica 1831-32.

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manage to organize themselves for revolt? What was their ideology and the nature of their leadership; what was their discipline like, their communications, their propaganda, their weapons, their tactics?

Craton does not tell us, at least not here, although there is a passage in his Epilogue which could have been, with certain qualifications, a fitting summation of such questions: The people's perennial struggle against their oppressors does not require an external program... slaves always resisted slavery and the plantation system, rebelling where they could or had to. Their aim was freedom to make, or to recreate, a life of their own in the circumstances in which they found themselves—no aim that placed them alongside all untold people throughout history, including their own descendants.

But to earn this conclusion, Craton should have given us, alongside the account of two and a half centuries of slave resistance, some account of the slaves' way of life and to provide this, he would have had to come to terms with the cultural anthropological challenge represented by the work of M. J. Herskovits which



Emil Nolde's "Süddeutsche Bewohner" (winter, color and brush and ink) was sold at Sotheby's earlier this month for £39,000.

despite a certain amount of lip-service, very few historians of slavery have seriously confronted. We needed an account not only of slave potential—their human/cultural/material resources—but of planter potential as well—the kind of "confrontation analysis" one would normally expect in an account, say, of the American Civil War or Vietnam or the Falklands/Malvinas crisis. Slave revolt/resistance did not, could not exist in a vacuum. It was resistance against totemic authority, against law and custom, against the loss of Africa, against the loss of an imaginary Africa, against a set of people who had been inured into thinking and believing and reacting in a certain way and who had systems of defending themselves against and controlling "others" who often outnumbered them by ten to one. It was also the more difficult resistance against persons they had often come to know, or to hate, or to care about; against walls that had to be scaled under fire, with a resolve that had somehow to be kept intact.

It was far more a question of resistance against such subtleties, it seems to me, than Craton's rather ambiguous "freedom to make, or to recreate, a life of their own in the circumstances in which they found themselves". If freedom to revolt meant freedom only to remain within the status quo, then the slaves would have had to believe that they were in the same cultural continuum as the planters. And although after emancipation significant elements among their descendants may have come to see it that way, most of the slaves (as Monica Schuler in *Alas Alas Kongo* (1980) and Craton himself in *Searching for the Invisible Man* (1978) point out), didn't necessarily see it that way at all. Which is why I am sorry and a bit surprised that in *Testing the Chains* Craton has elected not to include a discussion of slave culture within the context of their revolts.

The absence of any treatment of the revolution in Haiti is the other major limitation of this work, Craton no doubt excluded Haiti out of academic scruple. After all, it is not in the

British Caribbean, and its revolution could be seen as one of those external events and influences that, he argues, did not play as important a role in slave revolts as has been previously assumed. ("The discoveries that I have made all contribute to the devaluation of outside influences upon slave attitudes and behaviour.") But we cannot separate external from internal influences in this case in any but a tentative and arbitrary way. The Haitian revolution occurred in the Caribbean and was not like the French Revolution, an "outside" event; and the vast majority of the population of St Domingue were intimately related to the vast majority of the population of the British Caribbean by blood, by culture, and by a shared experience of bondage which must surely have cut across, in many instances, the (to them) artificial boundaries of national/political difference between French and British colonies. To make more than a familial connection, however, between the Afro-French and Afro-British Caribbean, we have to introduce a conceptual problem into the discussion: that of cultural influence and transference. Before Herskovits it had been more or less taken for granted that Africa had no culture; that if it did have a culture, it wasn't of the kind worth transferring; that it didn't have the kind of culture that was "transferable". Could a world without print, without writing, without art, without religion, without verifiable artifacts, scholarship, wit or education, be transplanted over centuries and oceans?

We have at last, more or less, accepted the thesis that this could and did happen, even though it is not always comfortably integrated into our work as historians. But we've hardly begun to apply this thesis to transferences other than those across the Atlantic. Which Caribbean American scholar, I wonder, would even now dare to posit a transfer of ideas and influence among the islands? And yet from the slaves' point of view, Haiti, with her victory of 1804, must have become a magnet, a black metropolis, an inspiration and example. But because we tend to exclude Haiti (despite *Black Jacobins*) from consideration of black consciousness in the rest of Caribbean consciousness, we date "The Age of Revolution", as Craton does, 1775-1815; covering, that is, the years from the American Revolution to the Battle of Waterloo. But would the Jamaican or Grenadian slave rebel intellectual have seen it that way? "The Age of Revolution" for them would be more likely dated 1790-1804, the period of the Haitian Revolution, or 1790-1807, to mark the victory of the end of the slave trade. Or we note a shift in the "nature" of slave revolts in the nineteenth century from "African" (simple? primitive?) to "creole" and note (naturally) the increase in numbers of creoles involved in slave revolts after the abolition in 1807. But were "creole" revolts necessarily more complex than the "African" ones? How, where, when can we decide on a significant dividing line between the two? In any case, the "second round" of Caribbean revolts begins not after 1807, in the "creole period", but coincidentally with the Haitian revolution itself: unrest throughout the archipelago and into the Guyana after 1795 was directly sparked by news of Haiti; the Second Maroon War in Jamaica, 1795-96; slave revolts in Surinam (1795) in conjunction with Maroons; Pédon's rebellion in Grenada (1795-97); The Second Black Carib (Maroon) War in St Vincent (1795-96); the Amerindian and slave uprising in Dominica (1795); the so-called Brigand's War in St Lucia (1796-97), not to mention the state of mind in Martinique and Guadeloupe the black regimental soldiers' mutinies in Dominica (1802) and Jamaica (1808); trouble in Belize and Tobago, plots and unrest in Trinidad; the Second Maroon War in Dominica (1809); and Barbados (1816).

These uprisings were, most of them, as heavily or significantly "African" as the revolt in Haiti itself had been; and they all involved three elements which we begin to focus on more clearly when we use Haiti as exemplar: the role of maroons, the role of black soldiers, the role of Afro-Caribbean religion as both motivation and weapon. All of these were present in full measure in Haiti; and the revolution there was successful, or rather, overwhelmed

the establishment, because it saw a remarkable integration of all these forces. In the British Caribbean, this threat was not ready for action until the late 1820s, but between 1795 and 1823, there were some lethal rehearsals. It was the growing recognition of this that stimulated the planters' "politricks" of "amelioration" while at the same time they saved face, as recently in Rhodesia, with day-to-day barbarism.

The examination of how the influence of Haiti spread would be an exercise in interdisciplinary history at its finest and most difficult. Michael Craton does not attempt this which is why, perhaps, the first part of his book, especially his (pre-Haiti) account of Amerindian-African-Maroon transatlantic alliances, has a dynamic lacking towards the end, although the detail that he brings to the last three major revolts of the period though not "new", is a most welcome consolidation of material. It is a question, in the long run of horizons. For a sheer listing and account of (rather than an accounting for) the slave revolts and conspiracies within the British Caribbean, this will become a standard work.

*The Mon-of-words in the West Indies: Performance and the emergence of Creole culture* by Roger D. Abrahams (203pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £20.75. 0 8018 2838 4) has recently been published.

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## Midwinter melodies

David Fallows

ADRIENNE F. BLOCK  
The Early French Parody Noël  
Two volumes, 211 and 670 pp.  
UMI Research Press: (distributed by Bowker  
Publishing Company, Eriassius House,  
Epping, Essex). £37.75 the set.  
08357 1234

There is a long history of sacred poems written to be sung to the music of well-known secular songs. The tradition seems to have received its greatest impetus from the Franciscans, and predictably enough the largest surviving repertoires come from the years around 1500 when printing was called into service to bridge the growing gap between secular and sacred poetry. Particularly in Italy and France many books were published containing what can only be described as hastily written devotional doggerel produced for the benefit of an increasingly literate and free-thinking middle class.

One such repertoire is that of the French Noël. Some sixty books of Noëls survive from the sixteenth century, mostly in unique copies. The poetry is for the Christmas season, and normally each poem has a heading that names the secular song on which it is based. Like several of the other repertoires, the Noëls therefore contain quite a lot of evidence – though often confusing evidence – about the secular songs of the time. But in the case of the Noël this is particularly difficult to interpret because the secular song repertoire was itself so diverse in the early sixteenth century. Popular melodies were increasingly incorporated into sophisticated polyphonic settings; so while the Noëls were presumably intended to be sung to simple tunes in the folk tradition our main evidence about those tunes must be derived from their repeated use in more pretentious musical contexts.

The main thrust of Adrienne F. Block's dissertation, published here with very few changes, is to provide a carefully annotated

edition of just one collection, *Les grans noëls*, published in Paris by Pierre Sergent perhaps in the 1530s. With 150 poems it is broadly representative of the genre as a whole. In Volume Two she prints each poem, listing other early sources, itemizing further parodies of the same original, and finally assembling all the musical information that could lead to reconstruction of the melody on which the poem is based. The material is thoughtfully presented: some ninety musical examples show careful transcriptions from early sources with both the original text and one stanza of the Noël text underlaid to the music. From a musical point of view this is all done with unusual accuracy and circumspection. That the poems themselves are just transcribed, without the detailed literary commentary that several of them clearly demand, is simply a result of the author's training in music rather than in literature and history. She surely made the right decision not to attempt criticism that lay beyond her expertise; moreover, any further commentary would have expanded the second volume well beyond its present enormous size.

The first volume is less impressive; the historical study that provides the bulk of it is dutiful rather than useful. Dr Block never quite decides whether she is offering a history of the entire genre or focusing on the Sergent collection published in the second volume. So her conclusions are less firmly based than they might be. There is a wealth of intriguing detail here, but as a book it is somewhat unsatisfactory.

Anything approaching a definitive study with this particular title will probably need to begin from an inventory of the whole repertoire and continue with a careful discussion of how the genre developed, how the poetic style changed, how the melodies were selected, what it tells us about the distribution of secular song in sixteenth-century France, and what influences this phenomenon had on the life of the time. All these questions are touched on but none is fully examined.



Swiss canton costume: an engraving from an album sold recently in Sotheby's.

## Mumming it up

Patricia Craig

HENRY GLASSIE  
All Silver and No Brass  
192pp. University of Pennsylvania Press.  
£7.95.  
0 8122 1139 1

Christmas was the time for mumming. In Irish country districts, up until about a quarter of a century ago, groups of young men, got up in distinctive costumes, would tramp from house to house in a particular neighbourhood, putting on a performance for the entertainment of each family. The play, a survival from the Middle Ages, was basically the same in every case, though the characters and their lines were subject to interesting variations. Mumming wasn't confined to Ireland, of course; but in the version of the odd little drama which evolved here, you find such emblematic figures as St Patrick and Oliver Cromwell: in no other setting would these have struck a chord with an audience.

The mumming performance began with a knock on the door. "Any admittance?" Captain Mummer would ask. If the company was invited to enter, each player would troop in on cue, until the ten or twelve actors were assembled in the stone-floored kitchen. The high point of the drama was the slaying of St Patrick by Prince George, and his resurrection following the ministrations of the Doctor. The mummings, all wearing belted cotton shirts over their ordinary clothes, and all but two or three decked out in fearsome-looking straw headpieces, would take care not to frighten the children of the house, if there were any, though sometimes they frightened innocent adults like the old lady who received an impression, in the course of the play, that an actual murder had been committed under her nose.

This is one of the diverting anecdotes re-

counted for the benefit of Henry Glassie, who, in *All Silver and No Brass* (first published in 1975), has recorded and transcribed extensive conversations with two ex-mummers and two householders who relished mumming. All were from Ballymenone in Co Fermanagh, the district which provided Glassie with the material for his large-scale anthropological study, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone*. The spirit of the mumming was jovial and neighbourly; every household, however remote, had a chance to view the dramatic proceedings of Captain Mummer and his men. A collection was taken, it's true ("Here comes I, Miss Finny/Wid a loog leather bag to carry the money"), but this was simply to meet the cost of organising a Mummers' Ball, the culminating social event of the Christmas season. "Life", as one of Glassie's informants says, "wouldn't be worth it without a little entertainment."

Glassie's ripper mummings, which made *Passing the Time* so heart-felt in work, is kept under a certain amount of restraint in *All Silver and No Brass*. To be sure, the book isn't without its moments of intensity: the farm kitchen, which really got the author going in the larger book, stirs his deepest feelings here too. "Let into the kitchen, the mummings ore led into the mind," he writes solemnly, with a meaning it isn't easy to divine. And when he states, "Like a rose, mumming unfolds to expose the inner logic of fundamental contraries: mala and female, life and death, hope and despair", one is tempted to add that his observation may be compared to a rose too: an overblown one.

For all that, Glassie's pursuit of what he calls "the meaning of mumming" is scholarly, careful and illuminating, yielding up much incidental information about the traditional way of life in this enticing locality (a little of Patrick Kavanagh's sourness about country matters wouldn't have come amiss, however), and uncovering all kinds of engaging literary reflections of the mummings' activities.

## Boom Christmas

Because the people of Britain know that the end is nigh and the instruments of Satan are already installed on our shores, they go mad for the Good Life, for the glass and the food and the thigh, lusting after Consumer Goods like kerb-crawlers after whores.

They know this is their Last Chance, it may not come round again, they know the sizzling turkeys may well be the Final Birds and each one knows what's fried may possibly be his brain, as the comforting Christmas Carol ascend in their fifths and thirds.

And all this is traditional, in times of great dying and Plague, like the Fornication on Tombstones and the Drunkenness in the Streets. It's a clear indication of a Giant Despair, it's not in any way vague – now it means bodies in plastic bags, as once it meant winding sheets.

GAVIN EWART

## THE TLS CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Readers are invited to answer the following questions and to send us their answers so that they reach this office not later than January 13. A prize of £100 is offered for the fullest set of correct answers received. Consolation prizes may be awarded at the Editor's discretion. Entries, marked "Christmas Quiz" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear in our issue of January 20.

1 Who  
(a) found his supper "waiting for him, and it was still hot"?  
(b) picked up "cold tongue cold ham cold beef pickled gherkin salad french rolls..."?  
(c) declared "I am so much enjoying your delicious salt"?  
(d) invariably thought that food tasted much nicer out of doors?  
(e) declared he had "room for six scotches more"?

2 Who or what belong in titles with  
(a) Fortunata  
(b) Dichtung  
(c) L'Etre  
(d) Persiles  
(e) Pestupleaye?

3 Who went to see "a famous moving picture" on March 27, 1713?

4 Helen of Troy:  
(a) in whose play did she really spend the whole of the Trojan War in Egypt?  
(b) whose play about her was entitled *The Last Time I Saw Paris*?  
(c) in whose *roman à clef* is a character named Miss Helena de Troy?

5 Where might one meet  
(a) Lucretia, Nigina and Merdmanne  
(b) Brilante, Momentillo and Crispissa  
(c) Manelita, Brambilla and Frusquinella?

6 What works of fiction are set on  
(a) a reading party in Scotland  
(b) a New Year's fancy-dress party in London  
(c) a party in a London railway terminus?

7 What Egyptian cigarette goes by its name to an Oxford inter-college war-cry?

8 Who  
(a) tried to see a Whig in a parson's gown?  
(b) was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawing his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground?  
(c) customarily wore an otter-skin, or some small scrap about as large as a pocket handkerchief, which according as the wind blew was shifted from side to side?  
(d) turned his pinafore wrong side forwards to represent a surplice, so giving the earliest indication of the strong clerical affinities later ascribed to him?  
(e) had it as the modest object of his ambition to wear a complete new suit of clothes, hat and boots included, at one time?

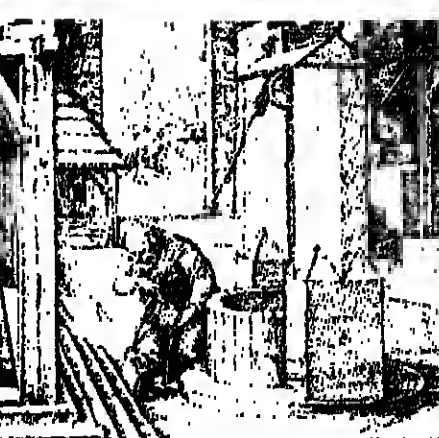
9 Who encountered in the Louvre, gave the disturbing suggestion that his slightly curved torso might be enclosed within some form of imperfectly fitting corset?

10 Whose  
(a) cotton frock was at once very old-fashioned and tremendously contemporary, school-girlish and advanced, demure and more than Chelsea-ishy emancipated?  
(b) pale yellow, idiotically old-fashioned silk dress looked so charming in the fashion book, but not on her?  
(c) dress was all white, and cut wedge-shaped in front, very deep; but an under-vest of crimson crossed the V in the midst and saved her modesty?  
(d) underclothes looked both old and new, as if she had that afternoon come across a mentally sealed unused set from her mother's trousseau behind a secret panel?

11 On what occasion  
(a) did the Prince abandon the Prince of

Wales because her dress had been unfavourably compared by fellow-guests to a nightgown?  
(b) did Monsieur L— appear in newly creased white shorts, a silk openwork vest, and white *espadrilles* laced like a ballet dancer's round his ankles?

12 What  
(a) style of dress provoked filial oedipism on the South Coast?  
(b) half the time, were fools in old-style hats and coats?



(c) had its appetite assuaged by tasteless garments, pushed through the bars of its cage?  
(d) did a harmless young shepherd in a soldier's coat feel to begin with?

13 How did the paths of Graham Greene and Edwio Muir meet in Mexico?

14 To defend himself against which Scottish writer did Samuel Johnson buy a epideictic?

15 Who fought and killed in a duel which editor on behalf of which biographer of which Scottish novelist?

16 Who are the following, and what do they have in common?  
(a) Everard Hall  
(b) Greg Billbow  
(c) Winsome Brookes  
(d) Casimír Lyplatt

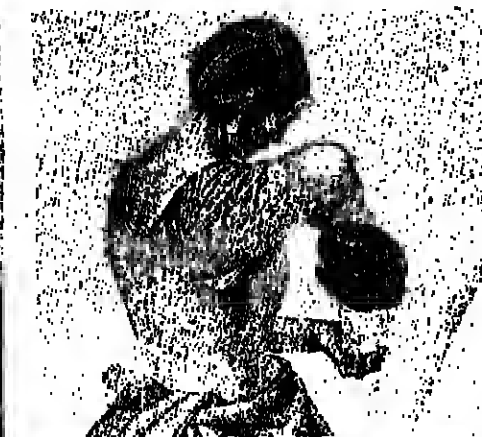
17 Who wrote the following words; and who set them to music?  
(a) I am Rose my eyes are blue  
I am Rose and who are you  
I am Rose and when I sing  
I am Rose like anything  
(b) Red roses blow, but thine, a year –  
In June, July or May:  
But owners of Red Noses  
Can blow them every day.

17 Who lived in

(a) Celesteville  
(b) The Lewisham Road  
(c) 32 Windsor Gardens, W  
(d) Brandham Hall  
(e) King's Thursday  
(f) Queen's Crawley  
(g) Melton Chase?

18 Which Italian writer fought a duel in Green Park?

19 What pursuit united Stiff, Daft, Craze and Blew?



20 Whose "metel processes are plah, one knows what be will do"?

21 Which poet died after being forced to vote several times over in an election?

22 How are the following better known?  
(a) Somhairle MacGill-Eain  
(b) Ruairidh Mac Thómais  
(c) Iain Mac a'Ghobhainn

23 Which writer is associated with  
(a) Cuverville?  
(b) Les Charmettes?  
(c) St Brice-sous-Forêt?  
(d) La Vallée-aux-Loups?  
(e) Nohant?

24 Whose autobiography begins: "I will begin with giving an account of my experiences amongst the publicans. Well I must say that the first man who ever threw peas at me was a publican, while I was giving an entertainment"?

25 Who recommended  
(a) a basin of gruel, "thin, but not too thin"?  
(b) camomile tea, "one teaspoonful to be taken at bedtime"?

26 What fields of contest have seen Rhodes, Argentine, Aurelius each named in second place?

27 Where is there  
(a) a glass-roofed billiard-room beneath a lake  
(b) a laboratory off the drawing room  
(c) a park with "sham Swiss mountains and passes decorated by china chamols... and elaborate caves and underground lakes lit up by electricity and festooned with artificial grapes, spiders, and other monsters"?

28 Who went to sea in  
(a) The Kittywake  
(b) The Clorinda  
(c) a sieve?

29 For what famous man did the name of Sussex prove ill-stored? And in the same year, of Hampshire?

30 Who spoke of "the suffering and Episcopal Church of Scotland – the shadow of a shade now, and fortunately so"?

31 Who recalled in print  
(a) *Years of Childhood*  
(b) *A Nineteenth-Century Childhood*  
(c) *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*  
(d) *A Victorian Boyhood*  
(e) *First Childhood*  
(f) *A Cornish Childhood*?

32 In what book of the Bible is the hero's dog mentioned?

33 Name the artist and subject of the six pictures from which details are shown on this page.

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# Remainders

## Eric Korn

I worry, sporadically, that one day the muddy but energetic stream of truly frightful, of sincerely hebecephalic/coconutty publications may dry up like a droughty wadi: no more syncretic cosmogonies by Huntingdonshire rector with time on their hands and much on their minds, no more private grudges made spectacularly public in doggerel pamphlets, no more Utopias founded on the pyramid inch or confrey soup. Today, I say fretfully, I may be able to tell you about *Love, Woman and Marriage* by "Casca Lianna (Good News)", a choice exemplar with its stirring telegraphese dedication ("TO - MY DEAD MOTHER - God Bless Her! - whom I never knew - for she died when I was but a babe - but to whom I am indebted for the Courage, Love and Manhood in me! - courage to breast the fiercest storm and to strike for the Right! . . ."); with its Prefaces A, B and C, respectively in prose, verse, and musical notation; and above all with its remarkable advertisement for itself: "the ablest and grandest book on Love, Man, Woman, the Laws of Affection and Marriage that ever fell from human pen. No description, critique or synopsis can begin to do justice to this mighty work, which ought to be bound in gold and be on the table of every man, woman and youth in the land and in the world." There are advertisements, too, for other works, such as *Daoua Bel, The Rosticruan Sympth, and The Disembodied Mon* ("Chap VII - The Complexion Question in Soul Life - Negroes are not Black in Soul Land, nor do they have woolly hair - Our Names in Heaven - Sustenance, food, drink, curious - Very - 'Free Love' - Singular"); all the works of the notwithstanding-the-neglect-springing-from-the-rivalry-of-infinitely-smaller-men-world-famous genius Pascal Beverley Randolph.

Or tomorrow I may spread the word about my copy of *Hon Kim's Husband-Catching, or a Manual for Marriageable Misses*, by that multi-talented author, the Hon Mrs (London 1846) with its strange New England marginalia. Can the same delicate hand that drew and lovingly shaded a stylishly sleeved hand pointing mournfully at the words, underlined and some doubly underlined, "oh bow bitterly recur to our bleeding hearts each word of unkindness, each hour of neglect that the departed one endured from us", possibly be the same gruff pencil that snarled "O.K." elsewhere in the margin ("O.K." is first recorded, from Boston, as it happens, in 1839, so *that's* O.K.), and also "not so because of physiologic-al and psychological reasons and infectious diseases"? Casca Lianna (what sort of a lexeme is that, by the way?) and the Hon Mrs (what may do me for today and tomorrow, but next week? Next year? Shall I have to start writing my own imbecility?)

I need not have worried; here, on cue, comes proof, two proofs in fact, that this rich spring will not run dry while the artesian sands of life do run. Here, dated 1983 and 1984 are two books as awful as anything the heaped silliness of past centuries could achieve.

★ ★ ★

*World Poetry 1983* maintains a high level from the title page. "Author and Editor by Kim Young Sam", with the holograph inscription: "Dear Poet: Alan Brown John" and the near-red hand-stamp "World Poetry" to the last leaf of all, with the publication date: "25, January, 1983. Published: 335, W25,000, prof KING YOUNG SAM Literature and Ethics, Chungbuk National University, World Poetry Research Institute, No 265-1 Seohang-Dong, Cheongju, Korea."

The poems are printed in the poets' own languages (English, Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Japanese and Korean) each with a translation into Korean; the Korean originals are translated into English, presumably by Kim Young Sam himself. The preface makes his qualifications clear: "With our whole hearts, we publish this world poetry which is full of a high fragrance of poetic art, which makes the individual who eagerly desired liberty, equality, and love comprehend, congratulating together let's unite our efforts gently."

The English language poets come not from England but from the USA, Malaysia, The Philippines, India and a place called Den Mark. I shen't quote any of the originals, though I am tempted by "A Bettle Horse" by A. Chakrabarti, and would like to congratulate K.V.S. Murti on writing an English line that sounds Korean - "beyond safe line in den so coy". The poets seem decent enough persons, judging by their photographs, their poems are no worse than anyone else's, and I suspect that the contributors may have contributed to the cost of publication, in which case they have suffered enough.

Some of the poems have the appearance of being translated, or not, from other languages: "This world seems to be a skren of karagoz" writes L. Sami Alkalini of Turkey. As for the Korean poems, it is hard to guess whether they have gained or lost in translation. Is An Cho-Guon's simplicity real or deceptive, I ask? I wish to be a tighthouse keeper And to be a wild rabbit Around the small spring. I wish to live together. You and me.

I doubt if her conclusion ("now you are a tear-drop / on the blade of a chrysanderum") could be bettered in Korean.

Is An Myeong-Ho as knowing as he sounds in English?

While brushing baby-teeth A set of artificial teeth get pulpy And occupy good seat of Ondol room Between the eyelid hollowed out Go over the winding road. Is it a fluttering snowflake?

A great many Kims have offerings in this anthology (I think Kim is a surname, despite the Ks being indexed between John Tworger and Lilian Hammer). "Pleasant memories / let them be kept under rocks", entreats Kim Dong-O; while Kim Yeon Sik urges the dreaming birds Fly Fly Fly to the sky Highly and immortality.

"If you want your poetry to be published in the special edition, we will comply with your wishes", says the preface, and sure enough one poet - well actually it's Kim Young Sam - has taken advantage of the offer. What he gets are a number of pages in the middle of the book, with the words SPECIAL EDITION printed at the top of each page. Here there is, in addition to a quite adequate supply of Prof Kim's poetry ("You look unbeatable to the dizziness / Caused by the wind, / Loneliness in loneliness? / Oh, you orchid"), a page of tiny photographs of his publications and achievements, from the *Virgin Poems* of 1953 to the receipt of the Anti-Communist Literature Prize in 1977, the musical score of "Balmie Breeze in May", a rhapsodic prose poem of infantile remembrances, like the opening of *Portrait of the Artist*, with a wonderful Joycean neologism or typo ("the deep dark night when the light had long been extinguished") and a strikingly favourable review of the above, on Jungian principles, by Jeong Gyu Yeong: "I'll finish my comment before my wordiness about this poem lead me to a pre-judge."

Well my wordiness may lead me to pre-judge, but I must quote in full the "Love Song" of Jeong Tae-Mo, which provokes all kinds of Pierre-Mepardesque questions about how many of its repetitions belong to Mr Jeong, how many to the translator, how many to the compiler, and how many to chance.

A small eyeball being looked in me sparkling sharply

An eyebrow being looked as me else where I think

Saw it ever before

So as the cloud being cruise over the mountain range

Like a breeze blowing mildly on bamboo leaf

An eyebrow gazing by my soul

Calmly and softly

A certain melody feeling best greazin' by my eurlap.

★ ★ ★

1983 is ending. The torch passes. It passes to Edward Prestwood, who is hiding (in his other hand) a copy, marked "Jan. 1984", of *The Creative Writer's Phrase-Finder* (ETC Publications, Palm Springs, California). At half the price of *World Poetry 1983* (\$17.95) it is still no bargain.

Like Professor Kim and Casca Lianna, Edward Prestwood doesn't mind self-advertisement. The cover design, which shows a creative writer's kit of ruled-paper note pad and sharp blue eraserhead pencil, declares "a fertile spawning ground for your own creativity . . . over 9,000 entries to speed you to writing success!" With Prestwood's help, you too could produce imagery like that. There's a similarly counter-effective commendation on the back cover, where *The Writer's Digest* Book Club, enthusing over *Write for the Religious Market*, says "for getting your writing off the ground floor, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better foundation".

The book consists of random lists of brief but colourful phrases, culled from a variety of best-sellers, and tabulated by a computer with a poorly-inked printer. (On second thoughts they would be less random and better spelt if computerized, so they must have been underlined with various coloured crayons and copied out by a worn-out typist with a worn-out ribbon.)

How to use the phrase-finder, or PHRASE-FINDER, as they prefer to call it? Well, "let's take a walk through the PHRASE-FINDER and bring it out for everything it's worth", as E.P. remarks in his second introduction. (The first introduction begins "Please invest sixty seconds and look at the dot pattern below" and asks "Was Truman Capote cheating? If he was, then so were the authors of *The Godfather, Once Is Not Enough, Valley of the Dolls* . . . successful authors use astrology books to help them create and develop character.") Anyway, the first step is "simple but important. Pause for a moment and decide exactly what it is you want to say."

Then you turn to the appropriate section of the phrase-finder and jot down a few that trigger ideas. The sections are things like PEOPLE, NATURE, URBAN, COGNITIONS, BEHAVIOR, TIME, ACTIONS and subsections (let's take URBAN) are things like Cities, Towns; Houses; Traffic; Streets; Crowds; Rooms; Affluent; Rooms, Non-affluent; Furnishings, Affluent; Furnishings, Non-affluent. Indeed that's the whole of the URBAN section, so if you're looking for idea-triggers on Urban Alienation, or Gorgeous Palaces (Affluent), you're in the wrong PHRASE-FINDER, buster.

Turn to Rooms, Non-affluent, and you find two pages of amputated phrases from the pointless ("quite rough, but cozy", "musty old hall") to the uncomfortably precise ("infested with crickets, roaches, and other disgusting creatures of filth", "the stench-ridden cabin"). Some of the phrases seem to be misplaced. Why should "breezy, sunlit room" or "vast, airy room" suggest non-affluence? Because this is Palm Springs, child, where air is for air-conditioning.

And so on, 9,000 of these second-hand, rapid, non-affluent phrases from, I suppose the authors of *The Godfather, Once Is Not Enough, Valley of the Dolls*, with the occasional Chandlerism or sub-Chandlerism ("like a Neanderthal someone has stuffed into a shirt and tie", "she walked with a motion cats spend years trying to perfect") to brighten things up. Prestwood is strong on Perfumes and Colours, which get a page each, mostly of brand names; uninspiring on sex, the longest entry, craving, trembling, pulsating, questing, welcoming, glowing, teasing, quick-breathing, panting, mounting, implanting, possessing, rocking, but ultimately very boring. Prestwood is at his worst when he adds anything of his own, like the helpful alternatives that some phrases spawn: "his feet obeyed magnificently (wanted to rebel)", "ubiquitous boyfriend (refers, husband)", "tried to wheedle his way into her heart (her life, her pants)", "wrecked

have with her emotions (finances)". There are several vigorous pages of "quotations ends":

"his father said wryly  
"the girl urged softly  
"purried the specialist  
"asked Joseph with some exasperation  
"eried Phintens with futile intensity  
"Sum asked truculently  
"trilled Mrs Davidson  
"he flared back at her  
"Rudyard exclaimed, fairly dancing up and down from of them.

There is no drama, if not nine thousand, ready-to-write already, especially if you avoid Prestwood's idiomatic phrases (like Caesar's wife, sword of Damocles, Barmecide invites a beggar in a feast, Alcoholic Amorous, and "you can't make ends meet by just going around in circles").

I think I've quoted enough. Too much of this can ruin your prose style for ever, and you will end up like the authors of *The Godfather, Once Is Not Enough* or *The Valley of the Dolls*.

★ ★ ★

My local constabulary - or possibly Interpol - are mounting a campaign against shoplifting and kindred seasonal sports, a campaign which features a sort of hairy pear called the "stealybug". He lounges in a hammock sipping a julep, resembles one of the more elaborately ciliated animalcules, or the popular image of a fairly benign bacterium, let us say the one responsible for dandruff or Caerphilly cheese. "Don't let the stealybug take things easy", "help cop the stealybug", "let's get the stealybugs out" . . . such is the general tenor of the message.

Well, well. Those who do not know their history are condemned to repeat it. Anyone of a certain age, or anyone who does know history, will recognize the stealybug as a done or bud or spore (I'm not sure how these things reproduce) of the Squanderbug, an ill-considered creature of the National Savings Association. Some time in I suppose the late 1940s these beings turned up in schools, I mean in shoals, though they turned up in schools too, in herds and flocks and mobs, on the back pages of magazines like *Picture Post* and *Razak*. The Squanderbug looked dirty, sly and jolly, like a favourite Uncle. He slipped into pockets and handbags and purses and scattered coins and notes, which he spent gleefully on all the little indulgences that the British had been denying themselves for years.

His very name, which was intended to excite fear and loathing, was in fact full of the most enticing overtones. To public school persons (we still had social classes then) bug evoked their favourite pursuits of sodomy and otomology; for the proles he was slummy and costly unhygienic. His appearance, which was meant to be offensively unshaven, villanous, and with a faint whiff of racial undesirability, suggested instead delightful anarchy and military nonchalance. He presided over an enormous outburst of heedless extravagance. He was replaced, I think, by the Fritterbug. He was replaced, the advice of a consensual psychologist who had decided that things being with "sq" were cuddly and pneumatic and probably smelt of vanilla, while fritterbug suggested rancid cooking fat or pagan culture heroes with undesirable habits (Fritterbug's Saga). The wave of desperate spending (I think)

Saga) had just come off the ration, but I may be conflating) continued, with results that we all know about. The whole campaign was a Billy Brown of London Town" whose progress recommendations on Tube trains nearly brought about a collapse of morale in those who had enjoyed the Blitz, or the leaflets, "YOUR courage, YOUR cheerfulness, YOUR resolution, will bring US Victory" which just about summed up the decade.

Well there you are; Interpol or the Metropolitan Police are condemned to repeat it. How on to your handbags. Far more likely to proceed, because it is near everyone's olfactory nerve, is the poster with "Why are you taking to my mother?" spoken by a woman polyposee who is being comforted by a woman polyposee son. This has already provoked raucous graffiti (fill in the blanks yourself) which shows it must be working.

# Letters

## Poland and Russian Nationalism

Sir, - Igor Vinogradoff writes (November 11) that the Poles "fought magnificently" in the First World War in defence of Russia. In fact, they fought for Poland. At the Pieniak conference (September 15-19, 1912) Roman Dmowski, chairman of the Polish Kolo (representation) in the Russian Duma, Wladyslaw Seyda, chairman of the Polish Kolo in the German Reichstag, and Stanislaw Glabinski, former chairman of the Polish Kolo in the Austrian Parliament, with other Polish politicians, resolved that the Polish nation, slung at unification and independence, would support the anti-German side in the approaching war.

After the outbreak of war, Representative Witold Jancinski, speaking in the Duma on August 8, 1914, said that the Polish nation would align itself with the Slavs with the aim of defeating the Teutons on the scale of Grunwald (Tannenberg) in 1410 and of unifying Poland - "born in three parts". He added that Poland was "deprived of independence" and the other problems must "at the present moment" be postponed. Six days later (August 14) the Russian generalissimo, the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, issued a manifesto to the Poles, proclaiming as Russian war aims a new Grunwald and the unification of the three parts of Poland into a single autonomous entity.

The Russian army which invaded East Prussia was mainly composed of Polish reservists. They fought for Poland. The Germans won the battle - ironically called Tannenberg (Grunwald) - but only because they transferred two Army corps and a division from the Western Front, thus opening the way to the Allied victory in the Battle of the Marne.

ROZEE GIERTYCH,  
15 Charingford Road, London N15.

## Psychohistory

Sir, - I have not yet read Ronald Paulson's *Representations of Revolution (1789-1820)*, reviewed by Norman Hampson (November 4), and am not, therefore, qualified to dispute his assessment of this book. However, some issues of general concern are raised by his discussion of Paulson's use of Freudian hypotheses.

His review, a model of clarity and clarity (given the quotations offered), reveals a not uncommon distrust of applied psychoanalysis. Hampson writes of psychoanalytic investigation as if it (even if a correct procedure) "would supply the particular experience of its specific significance". He suggests that it is not very helpful to discuss the decapitation of Louis XVI in terms of an Oedipal drama "since this would presumably be equally true of Charles I and Nicholas II. Instead of helping us to under-

stand what was unique about the French Revolution and people's reactions to it, the experience loses any particular significance."

It may be that in Paulson's treatment this is what happens; but I have the impression that Hampson would see this impoverishment in any interpretive exercise of this kind, however skillfully and sensitively carried out. Phrases like "Inevitably, if one is going in for this sort of thing" do not convey impartiality towards or an understanding of psychoanalysis.

Whether one is investigating a network of neuroses, or even of psychoses, for the purposes of therapy or, as with writers and historical subjects, for the purposes of better understanding the subject, it seems to me that the pattern of conflictual dynamics which emerges should do so, at the same time, in two ways: (a) in a way which enables us to identify the phenomena and taxonomically to distinguish to which categories of human behaviour they belong; (b) in a way which enables us to comprehend the particularity, within that general framework, of the patient's or subject's experience. To see patterns of repressed and misunderstood rage develop into overt violent behaviour is not to deny the specificity of the subject, but rather to grasp how the subject within his specific circumstances responds according to established clinical patterns of observed anguish.

This leads me to the question of the uniqueness of the French Revolution. In a trivial sense it is a unique historical event (as is my writing of this letter or as was Hampson's review). On the other hand, may one not recognize that many aspects of it (or, better, many of the conflictual dynamics informing many aspects of it) are far from unique and that in a sense - even without accepting the application of Freudian diagnosis to these events - they cannot be understood without reference to repeated patterns of human behaviour observed in different (historical) circumstances? The present obscenities being perpetrated in Tehran, for example, make far more sense in the light of Freud's gloomy observations about the displacement of the energies of repressed sexuality than they do if seen simply as a reaction to the Shah's rule or the threat of foreign domination.

Were sufficient documentation available, a minute analysis of the trial of Marie Antoinette would reveal, I suspect, a great deal about the contradictions and ambiguities of the personalities conducting it. A reading of the transcripts shows that part of the original charges laid against her accused her of teaching her son to masturbate. Here we have a supposedly a-religious anti-clerical tribunal proceeding with charges designed to portray the accused as a monster and (by implication) the Revolution as the upholder of sexual virtue. So well had the Christian taboos against masturbation been internalized that even when the dogmatic framework of the ideology was discarded they

were powerfully present to attack as a monster a woman who (had the charges been true) would merely have adapted Diderot's eloquently sane advice to mothers and daughters. But then Diderot would have loathed the Revolution and I doubt very much that he would have considered it unique in Norman Hampson's sense of the term. Perhaps, and this is merely a suggestion, the less one is concerned with the uniqueness of an event, the more one may be able to understand the forces that produced it or that are at work within it. ROBERT WILCOCKS,  
Department of Romance Languages, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

## E. M. Forster

Sir, - P. N. Furbank and I are grateful for Alan Hollinghurst's perceptive notice (November 18) of *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, Volume 1, 1870-1920. However, I feel obliged to reply to his statement (Letters, December 2) that what I wrote about Forster's letters is "simply not true". I referred, in my portion of the introduction, to letters that "help to trace the progress of his works" - "progress" not meaning, nor the interpretations that may (or may not), to use Furbank's phrase, help "to trace the creator to his lair" or "explain" the novels.

That tracing of Forster's work in progress occurs in most detail in connection with the later short stories and, to some extent, with *A Passage to India*. There are retrospective (but no less interesting or valuable) accounts of the progress of the earlier novels. Perhaps we might have included a note to the effect that we had written a general introduction to the two-volume set. However, that seems clear from our allusions to letters and events that plainly are distributed throughout Forster's life.

Letters that I describe as "long-distance editorial conferences" do indeed contain much material of interest to literary historians and critics, who need to know how works progressed before they can properly concentrate on searching out meanings or interpretations. And Forster's letters to his friends about their works tell us nearly as much about his own methods of work as about theirs.

If Alan Hollinghurst will be patient, next year he will find, in Volume 2, a goodly number of letters that "help to trace the progress" of works by Forster and his friends: letters to Eric Crozier, P. N. Furbank, Christopher Isherwood, T. E. Lawrence, Forrest Reid, and others.

MARY LAO,  
Department of English, College of Arts and Science,  
University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, Missouri 65211.

## 'Madness and Modernity'

Sir, - Scrota or no scrota, Ephesio Diana is traditionally represented as polymystic. In any event, the interpretation was C. R. Badcock's, not mine: Dieter Cartellieri's suggestion (Letters, December 16) that total oral gratification can only be obtained at the cost of genital renunciation is certainly appropriate both to the theme and to the idiom of *Madness and Modernity*.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD,  
Department of Psychological Medicine, Guy's Hospital, London SE1.

## 'Books in Progress'

Sir, - It seems strange that the Arts Council should be discontinuing "Books in Progress" (Letters, December 9). Surely the fact that it "has not been very much used" should make it an ideal project for them and is surely just why they should keep it going and not burden another organization with the continuation. It is an excellent idea and should continue.

Perhaps the Arts Council could promote its use by advertising the service in the TLS and not having its discontinuation being the only mention it gets!

HUGH PILKINGTON,  
C. O. Roseberg Ltd, 92 Great Russell Street,  
London WC1.

## Books from Oxford: Law

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Part I

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This first volume in a sequence of detailed monographs provides reference to existing experience in the field of international adjudication and to State practice, in addition to the recent work of the International Law Commission. It is the first monograph on this important topic to appear for many years. £25 Clarendon Press

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In this bold and stimulating survey, which presupposes no specialist knowledge of the subject, Professor Atiyah introduces a number of fundamental issues about the law, the legal profession, and the adjudicative process and answers many of the questions ordinary people ask about our idiosyncratic legal system. Paperback £3.95 OUP

## Oxford University Press



## COMMENTARY

## Littler than Littler

Harold Hobson

Cladarella  
Lyttelton Theatre

London's two principal subsidized theatres have both shown courage in their Christmas entertainments. They have taken the stock programmes of the commercial stage, and tried, with some success, to find originality in them. They have academic authority for doing this, since the RSC's *Peter Pan* at the Barbican and the National's *Cinderella* at Cambridge. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch once assured an audience that there was no form of entertainment so degraded that it was incapable of reformation, and by way of proving this he asked his listeners to compare the "joyous new wine" that Barric in *Peter Pan* had poured out of the dusty old bottles of pantomime, with its thigh-slapping Principal Boys and its vulgar, low-comedy Dames.

The National has evidently the more difficult task. It is true that the RSC's conception of *Peter Pan*, with a man playing Peter, might have caused Quiller-Couch some misgiving: it is a rendering not at all in accord with his notions about Barrie. Its worn and anxious Peter, built on that instant forgetfulness of love and delight which G. E. Moore, in *Principia Ethica*, took as the negation of pleasure, is not in the least joyous. Nevertheless, if the RSC shows *Peter Pan* to be a play written out of despair rather than joy, its material has the stamp of professorial approval. But *Cinderella* has no such support.

Pantomime and *Peter Pan* both show that in the British people there is a considerable strain of morbidity. *Peter Pan* is sick of heart at the thought of life in its maturity; and the vast majority of pantomimes, with their evil spirits, their lightning dwarfs, and their blood-thirsty ogres do their best to scare the life out of little children before that dreaded maturity is reached. It is an astonishing fact that British parents, when they want to give their precious offspring a special Christmas treat, nearly always take them to entertainments that are fundamentally life-hating. These little children have probably never done anybody any harm;

so their loving parents and their affectionate aunts and uncles reward them with nightmares.

It is wholly to the credit of Bill Bryden (who has directed *Cinderella* in the spirit of Pollock's Toy Theatres, with footlights and cardboard boxes and a Victorian curtain advertising Vinolia soap, Inverness capes, and various kinds of corsets) that he tries to get away from an atmosphere of terror and the rejection of life. He does, I must admit, introduce a demon king (James Grant), but this potentially frightening character is really a rather likeable Scotsman for whom one rapidly develops a certain pity; and it is a very satisfactory moment when, at the end, he decides to abandon his wickedness, and to enter the ranks of the saved.

What the National has led us to expect is a revival of the true Victorian pantomime, with rousing songs, choruses from the audience, a periodically descending and ascending white sheet bearing the words the audience is in-

tended to sing, transformation scenes of such magnificent splendour and ingenuity as Sir Emile Littler used to give, and an absence of television jokes. In some of these things it keeps its promise. Television is not so much as mentioned. There is a delicate transformation scene when a woodland glade changes from winter to summer, though it is nothing like so ambitious as Sir Emile's used to be. And there are songs, too, like "When the great big world keeps turning", which the audience is expected to take up and roar to its heart's content. The performance I saw was a preview, and previews are tricky things. One would never have guessed from the last preview of *Mr Cinders* that it would have a triumph on its first night, and that that triumph would continue. So perhaps the same thing will happen with *Cinderella*, and real audiences will thunder out its melodies as in times past I have heard them do at the Palladium and the Lyceum, in Barnstaple and Barnsley and Sheffield.



"Christmas Eve", a scene from a German toy theatre pop-up book, c.1885; it can be seen in the exhibition *The Spirit of Christmas*, at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood until January 8.

## New styles of architecture, a change of heart

Peter Kemp

REX WARNER  
*The Aerodrome*  
BBC1

1984 is obviously going to be the year in which we'll all be watching Big Brother. Television homages to Orwell and his work are already massing on the horizon. In the meantime, BBC1 has smartly anticipated all of this by screening the dramatization of a novel that predating 1984 by seven years – also depicts an authoritarian future.

Rex Warner's *The Aerodrome*, published in 1941, is very much a product of the 1930s. Opposing poles current in the thinking of that period generate its energies. Oscillating between a hidebound village and a uniformed aerodrome, it contrasts a moulderingly traditional way of life with one that is ferociously ideological, aggressively dedicated to the purging of society. "How should I live then?" Warner asked himself in one of his poems of the 1930s, "but as a kind of fungus, / or else as one in strict, tramping, for desperate war?" *The Aerodrome* explores this dilemma through an idiosyncratic medley of allegory, caricature and lyricalism. Its hero, Roy – first seen "flat on my face in the mud", then rising to power as an Air Force Pilot – confronts both alternatives. The old-fashioned way of life, he discovers, is messy and can be painful; the new-fangled one is streamlined but callous. Disillusioned, ultimately, with the aerodrome's limited, robot-like efficiency, he returns to the village – an existence that is imperfect but organic, warm, if wayward.

In Giles Foster's film of *The Aerodrome*, the novel's already rather simplistic opposites are exaggerated into a crudely gapping dichotomy, often achieved by distorting what is in the book. Warner attests, for example, that the aerodrome is strategically constructed so as to blend in with its surroundings: "The long hangars were set not in rows nor in any regular order, but were so disposed and camouflaged that even from quite close at hand they appeared merely as rather curious modifications of the natural contours of our hills"; even an arms depot looks "indistinguishable from a country church". In the film, though, the aerodrome becomes a starkly symmetrical compound of clanging iron grilles and giant concrete runways, towering wire fences, and rows of brutalist buildings, forbiddingly emblazoned with Fascist insignia. The village on the other hand – seedy and dispirited in the novel – is here turned, with insensitive tastelessness, into an idyll in Cotswold stone: quaint cottages, a lovely church and handsome manor are dotted among lush meadows and bursting beautiful gardens. Other sections of the story get prattified, too: the "congratulatory shed" in which Roy regularly makes love with a Village girl is transformed into a picturesque dovecote, twice appropriate to billings and cooings.

This pushing of things in the novel towards stereotyped extremes seems particularly ill advised in that Warner's work itself is, at best, precariously integrated: the tone fluctuates uneasily; some of the book's components aren't welded together as strongly as they might be; in particular, a farcical sequence of revelations about mistaken parentage, which does not bond very happily with the book's

bursts of politically-motivated slaughter – it's as though there's a strained attempt to amalgamate Feydeau and Faucim.

Foster's treatment pulled things roundly apart, so that the story seemed more a disconnected bunch of diverse happenings than a coherent whole. Moreover, his coarsening and softening process passed what is the book's main strength: the solid immediacy with which Warner establishes his rural world. The book's characters are inert – representative types, usually referred to as such: the Rector, the Squire, the Flight-Lieutenant, the Air Vice-Marshal. Even energetic performances – most notably, perhaps, a power-packed one from Richard Johnson as the proto-dictator – couldn't galvanize them into convincing life. Chimborosity, the two young men whose change of heart is central to the novel's purposes don't evolve but merely lurch – "I just feel rather different, these days" – from one stage to another. When he turns to the natural world, however, Warner instantly becomes acute – something evident, for instance, in his intensely precise renderings of the differing calls of birds: "the fierce brooked sparrow of an owl", the "confident whistling of redshank", "the outlandish scream of a lapwing". Piercing the early pages of the novel, then symbolically drowned out by the whine of jets – until the final moment when reformed Roy listens again to "a late-sleeping redshank whistle from the river" – these delicately caught natural effects were lost in the film's loudly artificial atmosphere.

Dennis Potter's *Sufficiently Carbohydrate*, reviewed here last week, is published by Faber (77pp, £3.50, 0 571 13261 8).

But there are other things to compensate any excessively modest silence audiences may show. The two hrokers' men (Jack Shepherd and John Tams) have a quiet, noble dignity as they pour red, white and blue paint over each other which is very impressive. The white punies which draw Cinderella's coach (with wheels glittering with electric lights) are charming; and the horse (Stephen Peitcher and Anthony Trent) is full of high spirits, and at moments dances with that joyousness which takes up and roars to its heart's content. The performance I saw was a preview, and previews are tricky things. One would never have guessed from the last preview of *Mr Cinders* that it would have a triumph on its first night, and that that triumph would continue. So perhaps the same thing will happen with *Cinderella*, and real audiences will thunder out its melodies as in times past I have heard them do at the Palladium and the Lyceum, in Barnstaple and Barnsley and Sheffield.

Prettiness, in fact, is something that Bryden has gone in for in a big way. As Phyllis Hartnell has acutely pointed out, the attractiveness of women in breeches parts had much to do with the development of Victorian pantomime. Bryden has captured much of this prettiness: Susan Fleetwood's Prince Charming is as handsome and romantic as Orlando, but she has too little to do, and practically nothing to sing. Her splendid legs and Cavalier hat are made little of. This *Cinderella* is without vulgarity; but it is also lacking in vigour. In the programme Tommy Trinder tells a remarkable story of a *Cinderella* of 1948 in which Evelyn Laye's Prince Charming made such "violent, sexy love" in Roma Beaumont's *Cinderella* that two Americans new to pantomime were aghast. "This for children?" they exclaimed. "In America we'd all be locked up." The Nationals could do with considerably more of the (totally unexpected) passion of Miss Beaumont and Miss Laye.

Curiously enough the best thing in the Lyttelton *Cinderella* is Trevor Rys's Baron Hurd. He comes to Cinderella's ball in the voluminous flannels of W. G. Grace, with a flowing beard and a small cricket bat, with which he hits a tennis ball bang into the audience. It is a light-hearted gesture, but it is not really characteristic of Mr Roy's performance. That performance has much of the world's melancholy in it. When the Ugly Sisters (Robert Stephens and Derek Newark) are wrecking Cinderella's dress, he looks on, contemplative, helpless, and. "All the world's ills," he says, "are caused by marriage." Turning to Buttons (Tony Haygarth) he adds, "Dear boy, show me to my carriage". The rhyme is atrocious, but Roy puts it in a whole universe of despair.

## SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS ON

Among the advertisements carried in the TLS of December 24, 1908, the Scottish Oceanographical Society draw attention to "Miss Wilton, Brown and Piria's *Zoological Log of the 'Scotia'*" (A Volume attractive to Sportsmen and Naturalists"), and the review *Public Opinion* were able to quote Lord Rosebery. "In a letter dated November 28, '08, from Dalmeny House, Edinburgh" – as giving the tribute: "I can truly say that 'Public Opinion' is a weekly joy to me. It gives me just what I want to read." Some "French Gift Books" were recommended by the editors, including a translation into French of Henry Harland's *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box*. And a whole page was taken by the Times Book Club to announce, in Gothic type, "The Cheapest and most costly book ever published"; viz the *Letters of Queen Victoria*, which they offered at 6 instead of the original 6s, with a share of commendation. George Meredith spoke of "The progress of every house having a bookshelf". Lord Curzon, though "myself a possessor of the original edition" was "glad also to become the owner of the new one". Maoy thought it a boon: "The Times" is conferring a boon on the English people" (Lord Roberts), "a great and very remarkable boon" (the Duchess of Grafton), "a signal boon" (the Bishop of Exeter). The Chamberlain sounded rather excited: "having previously purchased the original copy at £6, but was glad 'that the work is now within the means of all her subjects, and I trust that the opportunity which you place within their grasp will be largely availed of by them'. Fanny Bernard Vaughan summed up: "No Englishman can peruse these three volumes without feeling what a womanly woman and what a queenly Queen Her Majesty was".

## The ravages of war and weather

Frances Spalding

John Piper  
The Gallery, until January 22

Derbyshire is John Piper's Petworth. His "Derbyshire Domains", prominently exhibited in this retrospective, presents a panoramic view of this and other nearby country houses, in a style and format that compares with Turner's "Petworth Park: Tillington Church in the distance". Turner's low sun makes the scene radiant and expansive: Piper's Derbyshire houses beneath a black and sulphurous sky. This "dramatic semi-gloom", as Douglas Cooper called it (TLS, June 17, 1955) in one of the most reviews this artist has ever received, is in fact the product of experience. At Renishaw industrial soot used to beguile the attention of the Midlands aristocracy from the sources of their wealth. Its owner, Osbert Sitwell, remarked that Piper's oils and watercolours perfectly rendered "the darkness and diminished splendour of the countryside, its gloom and lovely melancholy and the occasional rage of it". In "Derbyshire Domains" the burnt-out atmosphere places the historic buildings in a twentieth-century perspective.

This ability to recapture past monuments for present-day imagination is one of Piper's strengths. Cooper condemned his lack of profound or original vision; but no other artist has so successfully revived the picturesque or drawn attention to our architectural heritage. In the hands of Rex Whistler, Algernon Newland and Tristram Hillier country houses appear as period curiosities, timeless and unreal. Piper treats them less kindly, shows their decline, witnesses the ageing process. ("Pleasing Decay" was the title of one of his articles for the *Architectural Review*). He has specialized in this, finding the battered glory of Vanbrugh's *Scone Delsval* especially suited to his nostal-

gic ruminations. It sits overlooking countryside dotted with slag heaps and scarred with railway lines. "House and garden", Piper has written, "are seared by the east wind, and riven with fretting industrialism, but they still withstand the noise and neglect, the fires and hauntings of twentieth-century life".

"Sutton Delsval" and "Lacock Abbey" are the first paintings in this exhibition to display his personal bravura. He scratches into the print so that the black background breaks through with sombre effect. This rough treatment suggests the movement of wind, spasmic light and weather-beaten stone. It also animates his picture surface and suggests a spontaneity that some find facetious. This is partly because the speed and freedom with which he manipulates paint is unEnglish; his flung line

and loose washes of colour offend against that neatness which trims our lawns and hedges. His facility can lead to repetitious effects but, mostly, his dancing highlights have a purpose: indicating the rustication in Holkham's entrance gate, or the continual flicker of reflections on Venetian stone.

The results are undeniably theatrical, as are many of the buildings that he paints, not least Vanbrugh's. Piper's work for the theatre – one whole room is given to his designs for plays and operas – inevitably enhanced this leaning. But there is a difference between the stage and the dramatic; and in this well-selected retrospective Piper's heightened awareness never lacks feeling. With the onset of war, circumstances matched the tenor of his art. Piper's career was advanced by destruction: he arrived in Coven-



"St Raphael, Dordogne", 1963, by John Piper, from the exhibition reviewed here.

## Starting out

A.S. Byatt

The David Higham Prize

Some literary prizes make the judges work harder than others. Like Booker, the David Higham Prize, awarded for the best first novel of the year, expects its judges to read all the novels submitted by publishers. It is a good price: a first novel is a recognizable category, and a work of art by someone 29, or 35 or 41, or any other arbitrary figure. There are first novels by the very young and by the middle-aged who have decided to say what they have to say. All these authors are presented with similar artistic problems:

The prize has been awarded for the last nine years. This year Nina Bayden, David Hughes and I read forty-four first novels – more, I believe, than have ever been submitted before. It is a more interesting process than reading *novels* "selected" by pre-judges, or plucked at random from our pooled vague knowledge of the publishing world, not only because one is more sure that one has made a choice one can stand by, but because it is intriguing and illuminating to see the full range of what authors choose to write about, and publishers think worth publishing.

This year a considerable vitality and range can be seen from the list of novels we finally recommended. The winner, R. M. Lammings' *Book of Glorinda Cavallotti* (Cape), is a study of Renaissance Florence full of wit, curiously detailed and lively people. John Fuller's *Nowhere* is already, deservedly, a best-seller. Jonathan Keates' *Allegro* (Faber), a long, tall elegantly written novel of politics and detachment in early twentieth-century Italy. Then there was Bernard Vaughan's *Clay's Bulb* (Hutchinson), a surprising miniature Irish epic about the power of training fighting cocks. Also there was a quite different way, was Patricia Lawrence's accomplished thriller about un-

pleasant murder in 1930s New York. I admired this for the precise and inexorable imagination that went into it – nothing stock, nothing slipshod. Patricia Wendoff's *Peacefully in Berlin* (Hamish Hamilton) is also precisely imagined and felt-through. It is an account of an English woman's marriage to a German prisoner of war, an encounter of cultures, things understood, misunderstood, loved, fought about.

For the rest – what trends can be discerned? Lionel Tilling once said that the essence of the novel was the exploration of morals through manners. There are almost no studies of manners, and few novels, perhaps surprisingly, of young sensibility. There is also little social realism – I liked Tom Gallacher's *Apprentice* (Hamish Hamilton), both for its accuracy about the industrial North and for its insight into morals and manners. Last year, and I think the year before, there was a crop of brutal sentimental-anthropomorphic animal tales, possibly cashing in on, or inspired by, *Watership Down*. This year, I'm happy to say, there were none.

Feminist novels have increased. Several of them were accomplished, though I worry about the concentration on Woman's condition which, possibly accidentally, seems to exclude other ambitions. Doris Lessing, Muriel Spark, Iris Murdoch are the major novelists of their generation. They take on God and politics and society. Where are their successors? Another increase was to blackish comedy of uncertain tone, not quite knowing how easy to be, Beryl Bainbridge without the fine ear, Martin Amis without the energetic prose.

Perhaps the clearest discernible trend – if one thinks also in terms of last year's winner, Glyn Hughes's *Where I Used To Play on the Green* (Collins) – about eighteenth-century Evangelism in Haworth – is for serious, varied and imaginative interest in the past. Fuller, Lammings, Keates and to a lesser extent Roberts and Wendoff on this year's shortlist are students of human history; which at the moment seems to illuminate, or interest, us more than manners or sociology.

## Off-screen onstage

Dilys Powell

JULIAN BERRY, CHRISTOPHER ADLER and  
MARVIN HAMLISH  
Jean Seberg  
Olivier Theatre

The original idea of Christopher Adler on which this musical drama is based is perhaps more interesting to the cinema enthusiast than to anyone else, for the evening is full of reminiscences, and, even though the films brought to mind are not all that hot, it is pleasing to be reminded; it is even stirring to be induced to reflect on the feverish world of the screen and the curious place it has come to occupy in our lives. Jean Seberg was a young actress caught in that passion; she allowed herself to be caught. The history of the cinema is studied with tales of the victims of the profession; Jean Seberg, four years after her death, is claimed as a victim. One may recognize some of the justice of the claim. But not all of it; and that is bound to affect the response of a film-minded audience.

Seberg was not a great star. Picked by Otto Preminger (played here with suitable heartlessness by John Savidant) as the heroine of his *Saint Joan*, failing to project power which the role demands, she made only an accidental impression; she was actually singled by the flames of the executioner's fire. Her pale American looks attracted French taste, and she had a considerable success in Jean-Luc Godard's *A Bout de souffle*. Nothing much else; only the shadowy unhappy figure; and one is left with the question: why a musical about a sad failure from the jungle of the cinema? And only the vicissitudes of her forgotten life offer an answer – a life which, with its relationships (she was married to the writer Romain Gary) and its political attachments, was a good deal more noteworthy than her professional career. On paper she was pursued by the FBI, she bore an illegitimate child which she appears to have buried with her own hands

try the day after the cathedral had been bombed and painted it still red-hot from the fire. He also painted scenes of devastation in London and Bristol and in April 1942 went to Bath to record the effect of a "Baedeker raid" on churches and other fine buildings. In his oils he registered rich colours and ragged outlines, the magnificence of chaos. His watercolours, such as "All Saints Chapel, Bath", in which ruined architecture is left exposed like a fragile shell, are more melancholic.

There is a theatrical quality even to his 1930s abstracts which can be regarded as a compressed arrangement of stage flats. These make an impressive start to the exhibition and at the time earned him a position among the avant-garde. His abstract constructions are likewise tautly designed, having that spare geometrical quality which he admired in nautical things. Nothing is arbitrary in these substantial works. The evident commitment which went into their making, and made Piper a respected figure within the 7 & 5 exhibiting society, gave extra push to his subsequent reversion to landscape. "After an abstract period", he recalled in 1943, "what a release one feels!"

His return to landscape painting in the late 1930s owed much to his work for the *Architectural Review* and the *Shell Guides*. This is not demonstrated in the exhibition and insufficiently stressed by the catalogue. Piper's sharp eye, revealed in articles and photographs on pubs, topography and nautical style, brought him the friendship of John Betjeman, with whom he collaborated on the *Shropshire Shell Guide* and whose books he has illustrated. It is in comparison with this poet that Piper's limitations are most clearly revealed. For the artist lacks the common touch; instead of the humour, which Betjeman manages to highlight without dramatization, Piper's natural inclination is to unleash in his paintings a storm or tempest. Even a parish church is turned into a stage set. And after a time one cannot ignore the absence of a cost, still less the lack of any sense of human use.

– the story seems terrible, even tragic. But the stage version doesn't support tragedy; nor does the playing, agreeable though it is, of the principles.

The performance of the leading figure – Elizabeth Croucher and, as the young Seberg, Kally Hunter – pleases without exciting. The songs don't stay with you; though one notes a sharp duet ("My lips are sealed") by Kate Denlin and Joy Ferret. The playing of Joss Ackland as Romain Gary sketches in the power one looks for. But what is missing is the exhilaration which the American musical has led us to count on, especially in the dancing. Here, the dancers can dance, but one feels they don't have to.

There is, however, one great pleasure: Peter Hall's production. One scene, no intervals, the changes of location beautifully managed by brisk whipping in and out of automobiles or coffins; delightful back projections evoking France or America. Perhaps only afterwards does one recognize the grace with which it is done; but it is there.

## AUTHOR, AUTHOR

There is no competition this week, as we feel that readers will want to concentrate their energies on the TLS Christmas Quiz on page 1429. Competition No 154 will appear next week, and below we give the answers to Competition No 150, to which there was, disappointingly, no response.

1 When our travellers arrived at Brussels, in which their regiment was quartered, a great piece of good fortune, as all said, they found themselves in one of the greyest and most brilliant little capitals in Europe. W. M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, chapter 27.

2 Brussels is rather a sickening place. Perhaps Bruges will be less sickening a place than Brussels, which (for a place) is rather sickening. Oh, it will do, of course. Not like England. But one wouldn't expect it. Rupert Brooke, letter to Dudley Ward, September 9, 1907.

3 "Do you know where the honeymoon's to be spent?"

"They begin, I believe, by Brussels –"  
"I can hardly imagine anyone", Lady Georgina observed, "setting out deliberately for Brussels."  
Ronald Firbank, *Vain glory*, chapter 1.



# The world in essence

Idris Parry

J. F. HENDRY  
The Sacred Threshold: A Life of Rainer Maria Rilke  
184pp. Manchester: Carcanet New Press.  
£9.95.  
085635 3698

Rilke tells a correspondent that in his poetry he is always saying the same thing; his work is an effort to find a better way of saying it. One consequence is that we can take almost any poem and work from this centre in search of its meaning. The message is more obviously accessible in some poems than in others (Rilke would have been disappointed if this were not so), and the first requirement of any writer about Rilke, especially when he has as little space as this biography allows, is that he should choose really expressive extracts for illustration. If he can do this, the book may be as illuminating as much longer works, for the essence can be captured in brief.

J. F. Hendry makes an excellent choice of material from the poems and letters. For example, he puts much emphasis on the requiem written for the painter Paula Modersohn-Becker in 1908. I am persuaded that no more is needed for a good understanding of Rilke than this requiem and the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, which are themselves of course another requiem, expanded into an affirmation of all life.

## The future in embryo

Michael Butler

ERNST STADLER  
Dichtungen, Schriften, Briefe: Kritische Ausgabe  
Edited by Klaus Hübner and Karl Ludwig Schneider  
500pp. Munich: C.H. Beck, DM196.  
3 406 08599 7

A charming, cultivated German: Rhodes scholar and not German in appearance – much finer than usual types – runs a note on Ernst Stadler by a representative of Toronto University, scouting for a new Professor of German in 1913. When sounded out on the same occasion, all that Stadler's Oxford college could remember was that he had caused some trouble by delaying completion of his BLitt thesis. Sixteen months later Stadler was killed in action on the Western Front. Canada had lost an exceptional scholar and Germany one of its most promising younger poets.

Fluent in French and English, a brilliant translator of Francis James and author of substantial critical work on the reception of Shakespeare in Germany, Ernst Stadler was a remarkable, if somewhat peripheral, figure in Wilhelmine Germany. With hindsight it is possible to see that he was particularly well equipped to fulfil his ambition, as a native of Alsace, to mediate between the cultures of France and Germany. Both his poetry and his scholarly work, first at Strasbourg University and later as the first Professor of German at the Université Libre in Brussels, revealed broad emotional and intellectual sympathies fused with an imagination of rare energy.

Even after Stadler had thrown off his initial identification with neo-Romanticism and Impressionism and begun to recognize the darker side of contemporary civilization, his scholar's sense of continuity proved a sufficient antidote to the cultural despair which afflicted so many of his generation. Indeed, more than any German poet, he can be seen as the self-conscious bridge between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His first collection, *Prageliden* (1905) – the manuscript of which has now come to light – was written under the spell of George and Hofmannsthal, and it was not until the publication of his major work, *Der Aufbruch* (1914) – after a long gap largely filled with academic work (including the two-year scholarship at Oxford) – that his poetic reputation was established. In *Der Aufbruch*, which is a major document of German Expressionism, Stadler found his own distinctive voice, tone and style: a vitalistic affirmation of life which,

In this biography we can trace clearly the connection between the poetic lament for Paula and Rilke's discovery of Cézanne the previous autumn. The requiem becomes a reproach for lost concentration; the lesson drawn from Cézanne can be summed up in a phrase from notes called *Das Testament*, where Rilke says the principle of the painter sitting in his garden "like a dog".

This theme of submission, so important for Rilke, emerges again and again. In a letter to his wife, Clara, herself a painter and Paula's friend, Rilke says one should not paint "I love this" (that is, separating subject and object) but "Here it is": "This consuming of love in anonymous work, which gives rise to such pure things, probably no one has succeeded in doing so completely as old Cézanne." In speaking of Paulin and Cézanne he is discussing his own problems, looking for classical submission to the law, thinking of the old painter sitting in his garden "like a dog".

Rilke seems to know from the beginning that his mission is to identify the self with the world so that his poetry can be the world in essence. To identify the self with the world is to suppress the self as separate entity. His constant problem (and it hasn't gone away since) is to reconcile the poet's need for submissive solitude with the equally imperative need for unrestricted experience of life. He speaks of his creative powers coming from "the plainest adoration of life, from the daily inexhaustible wonder at it (how could I have been productive

whilst acknowledging the achievements of the past, dynamically expressed the needs of the future.

The principal merit of this extensively revised and enlarged version of Karl Ludwig Schneider's pioneering edition of 1954 (reviewed in the TLS, December 2, 1955) lies in its clear presentation of the complex interaction between Stadler's criticism and his poetry. Both are imbued with an optimistic humanism which contrasts sharply with the apocalyptic visions of George Heym (whose work Stadler nevertheless was one of the first to admire) and the existential anguish of Georg Trakl, these being the two early Expressionist poets with whom his name is most often linked.

The new edition offers numerous improvements on its predecessor. In particular, a more generous typographical layout enables the reader to appreciate more easily the long sinewy line of Stadler's best Expressionist poems – a form which owes far less to the Walt Whitman cult than the work of lesser poets such as Werfel and Becher. Furthermore the editors have traced an additional thirty poems (twenty-three hitherto unpublished) from various stages of Stadler's career. Twenty-six new letters have been printed, together with eight addressed to Stadler, and a wider selection of critical essays and journalism (with excellent annotations) makes a welcome contribution to a more balanced assessment of Stadler's progressive political and social attitudes.

Since 1954 two major items have been discovered. One is part of the manuscript of a lecture delivered in 1914 entitled "Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik der neuesten Zeit" which was hitherto known only through some surviving notes made by a contemporary listener. The fragment analyses the pervasive influence of Nietzsche on the younger generation and offers an assessment of the work of Richard Dehmel, but it is enough to confirm Stadler's awareness of judgment and historical sense.

The other discovery is a war diary kept meticulously from July 31 to October 22, 1914, eight days before his death. In stark contrast to the measured enthusiasm of Stadler's normal prose style, the diary is flat, sober and almost entirely factual. In a sense it is more interesting for what it does not say. There is, for example, no hint of the pro-war hysteria which claimed – momentarily at least – such different writers as Rilke and the young Brecht (though not, one might add, his friend and fellow Alsatian, the elegantly pacifist, Schickels). Apart from a moment of pride on the award of the Iron Cross, these pages simply register the senseless slog backwards and forwards to the front, the

otherwise?"). And describing days spent with Duse in Venice he uses words just as true of his poetry: "A pure significance came out of the simplest things."

Professor Hendry quotes effectively and with admirable judgment from Rilke's letters, treating them as vital to his creativity. Hendry doesn't, however, mention the letters to Countess Sizzo, a most intense summing-up by Rilke in his later years, and so, one would have thought, an invaluable quarry for such a brief book. This and other collections are not mentioned in the bibliography either. When a bibliography is labelled "select" you feel some body is on the defensive. This bibliography is fragmentary, sometimes incorrect (it should not be too difficult to allot the contents of the *Sämtliche Werke* to the correct volumes) and unnecessary. The book is not for Rilke scholars but is just right for readers who know little or nothing about him; all they need is a list of available books on Rilke in English and of translations from his work.

It's always a problem, especially in a short book, to know how much weight to give to the poet's outer life and how much to the work. Professor Hendry strikes a useful balance. His pages are packed with detail about the poet's daily life. Some readers may wonder if it really helps to be told that Rilke received a legacy of 20,000 kronen from a stranger or that he and Trakl shared a donation given by Ludwig Wittgenstein for the benefit of poets. But so many books about Rilke keep away from the subject

anonymity of death in mechanized warfare.

Though clearly not intended for publication, the diary does support the view that the essential thrust of *Der Aufbruch* is an aesthetic one. The use of military images, especially in the programmatic title poem, can be seen more clearly in the light of the diary as metaphors for a personal and cultural new beginning rather than any immature desire for war as a cleansing agent, such as Heym, for example, once expressed.

Based on Beissner's classic Hölderlin model, this critical edition is exemplary in its methodological clarity and includes an updated essay on Stadler by Schneider which is both judicious and illuminating. A full bibliography of primary and secondary literature rounds off an impressive editorial achievement.

If the 1954 edition restored Stadler's name to the list of important early Expressionists, its successor should encourage renewed attention to a poet-critic who combined a profound knowledge and love of tradition with an unusual ability to recognize the originality of such "shocking" new writers as Carl Einstein, Gottfried Benn and Carl Sternheim. His death was a major loss, for having perceived with as much acumen as anyone the spiritual crisis of his time, Ernst Stadler had more intellectual energy and human warmth than most to tackle the urgent problems of cultural reconstruction that were to confront a shattered post-Imperial Germany.

## Convenience

The public servant of men's private parts,  
Plain clothed in the underground below Eros,  
With white glazed stalls, and see-through mirror arts,  
I plumb our language empire's omphalos.

Your profane oracle, I speak through a crack  
In a mental block, going far back to the year  
You stood here, epicentred on the shock  
Of gross accusation, quaking at words like queer.

I watched you face an absurd firing squad  
Unbuttoning uniforms, I, too, had lost  
My primal sense in the promiscuous crowd.  
Defected, blackmailed, judged, you paid the cost.

A life sentence, ambiguously imposed,  
Props you behind all kinds of bars, exposed.

RICHARD MURPHY

# The functions of war

David Rock

DAVID HALPERIN DONGHI  
Guerra y florecencia en los argelinos del exilio  
1970-1980  
200pp. Buenos Aires: Belgrano.  
OSCAR OSZLAK  
La Formación del estado argentino  
200pp. Buenos Aires: Belgrano.  
CARLOS ESCUDÉ  
Guerra y florecencia en los argelinos del exilio  
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200pp. Buenos Aires: Belgrano.  
OSCAR OSZLAK  
La Formación del estado argentino  
200pp. Buenos Aires: Belgrano.

The four historical studies under review deal, in many respects quite originally, with several important issues in Argentine history, some of them strikingly relevant to Argentina today. Such relevance is easy enough to demonstrate with the books by Hiroshi Matsushita and Carlos Escudé, the first of whom discusses the rise of nationalism and Peronism in the Argentine labour movement, and the latter Argentina's international relations during the war and early post-war periods – the great watershed in modern Argentine history. But there is a good deal of contemporary significance also in the two other books, on nineteenth-century subjects, Tullio Halperin Donghi on war and state formation between 1791 and 1850, and Oscar Oszlak on the formation of the nation-state between 1850 and 1880. These two works differ enormously in technique and conceptual approach, but share an ingrained Argentine

insistence on political order and systems of political authority. Among Halperin's eminently modern concerns are the broader social and political impact of military spending, economic development and political control in an inflationary society, and linkages between a state's economy and authoritarian political organization. With Oszlak's work the temptation to draw modern connections or allusions becomes even stronger. If Carlos Tilly's aphorism, quoted by Oszlak, that "War made the State, and the State made War" may be true of almost all nations, it is particularly apt for Argentina. Here War made both the State and the Nation (though for long periods too War also undermined them). But the British invasions of Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807 helped ignite the sparks of patriotic consciousness in Argentina; later, like the War of the Triple Alliance against Paraguay (1865-70), played an important part in consolidating the embryonic Argentine state. The state-building functions of war resurfaced in some of the escapades of the military junta after 1976, during *la guerra sucia* or "subversion". In the junta's conflicts with Cile, and finally in its invasion of the Falklands, Under the junta, war or the threat of war had many of the same objectives as a century or more ago. War was designed to consolidate and legitimize new systems of authority, create a stable ruling class and a regimented social order, and fashion the preconditions for revolutionary economic change.

Tullio Halperin is widely recognized as Argentina's outstanding living historian. His works on the early nineteenth century, notably *Provincia y Guerra* (1972), are replete with insights of admirable substance and acuity. His new book on state formation from the late colonial period to the aftermath of independence was in 1850 represents another masterly elucidation of a complex era. The most widely accepted accounts of the process of the independence struggle in the Río de la Plata (a revolution precipitated by the overthrow of the last Spanish viceroy on May 25, 1810) have stressed conflicts between colony and metropolis over trading practices in Buenos Aires, British military and commercial incursions into the region, and lastly the collapse of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain after Napoleon's invasion and occupation in 1808. Halperin's detailed and arduously compiled work, however, is not a polemic. It is a work of sober reflection, and in doing so subtly leads the reader towards a re-evaluation of the

independence wars. The study shows that in the early 1790s the silver mines of Potosí, Buenos Aires's great acquisition from the Spanish imperial reforms of the 1770s, provided almost 80 per cent of the city's annual revenues. A decade later this proportion had fallen to a mere 6 per cent. Decline occurred not so much because mining was in disarray (its collapse came after 1810), but because Spain had now begun to appropriate the Potosí revenues to finance its wars in Europe.

The contraction in revenues obliged Buenos Aires to search for alternatives. The city therefore shifted to taxing foreign trade on a much larger scale than before. The change occurred at a time when trade with Spain was dwindling as a result of the European wars, so that to generate revenues Buenos Aires was pushed increasingly towards free trade. However, free trade, most of it initially with Portuguese Brazil but later with Britain, quickly fostered a new and powerful class of merchant and producer beneficiaries. They became increasingly refractory to returning to the pre-war imperial mercantilist trading system, and eventually provoked revolution in Buenos Aires in order to consolidate free trade.

Second, as it lost the Potosí revenues, Buenos Aires began taxing its surrounding provincial dependencies more heavily, a practice which exacerbated the interregional tensions that had later led to political disintegration, and to decades of civil strife. In this way Halperin suggests that rather than being issues secondary or incidental to independence and its sequel, revenue and taxation were primary and central.

Halperin also examines in some detail the effects of maritime blockades on Buenos Aires: that by Brazil during the late 1820s, that by France between 1838 and 1841, and the Anglo-French blockade of 1845-7. Because revenues were now so closely linked to trade, blockade invariably forced governments in Buenos Aires to resort to inflationary financing. However, the redistributive effects of inflation – in much the same way as they do today – swiftly provoked acute political instability. In the 1820s the Brazilian blockade became a major factor in the rise of Juan Manuel de Rosas to supplant power in Buenos Aires; the French blockade a decade later almost provoked Rosas's fall. Halperin illustrates the differential impact of the French blockade among local cattle-ranchers. Some cattlemen, usually the larger and more powerful, reacted to the cessation of trade by occupying new land and increasing their herds. But others failed to gain access to new land, and since they lacked the option of increasing their investments, were obliged to dump livestock on the internal market, where prices rapidly fell. Cheap meat lowered the urban cost of living, and made Rosas's task of maintaining political control easier. But outside Buenos Aires the blockade induced depression provoked the Chascomús rebellion of 1839, an event that has frequently perplexed historians unable to see why a band of cattlemen should revolt against Rosas, the very embodiment of cattlemen's rule.

Halperin's account of the Rosas period (1829-52) should be read alongside John Lynch's recent distinguished political biography of Rosas. For his part Halperin perceives several discrete stages in the Rosas dictatorship; he also launches a set of new propositions to explain its fall. By the 1840s, Rosas was no longer simply the instrument of the large *estancieros*. He had now become the head of a largely autonomous and self-sufficient military

rule, a personification of *caudillo* rule at its acme and not far removed from the autocratic rulers of pre-1865 Paraguay. The régime now drew large resources from state-run cattle ranches confiscated from Rosas's political enemies. But the great weakness of his state lay in its excessive militarization. Heavy military expenditure forced up wages in a labour-starved economy, hindering economic growth in a period of expanding commercial opportunity. To help finance his army, Rosas squeezed the salaries (through inflation) of the civil administration. In doing so he steadily alienated a politically crucial class of *funcionarios* in Buenos Aires, who when the opportunity arose, turned against him. Lastly, again to augment his revenues and his military strength, Rosas tightened the monopoly exercised by

Buenos Aires over River Plate commerce, an act that finally precipitated the provincial revolt leading to his downfall in 1852.

Oscar Oszlak's study deals with the transition from the segmentary political order of *caudillo* rule of 1810-60 to the oligarchic national state formed between 1860 and 1880. He examines the abortive attempt during the 1850s to establish an "Argentine Confederation" dominated by the provinces beyond Buenos Aires, led by Justo José de Urquiza. Next he illustrates the victory of political unification under Bartolomé Mitre in the early 1860s, but this time led by Buenos Aires. Finally, he treats aspects of the period 1865-80, which saw the war with Paraguay, the beginnings of British investment, and Argentina's first "modern" commercial/investment crisis, beginning in 1873. Oszlak points out the symbiosis between the rise of the nation-state in Argentina and economic expansion. The great conundrum facing state-builders was that political instability and division often constrained economic expansion, but growth was a necessary condition for the protection of political order. Thus political unification was largely accomplished by virtue of a long economic boom between 1860 and 1873. By the mid-1870s, though weakened for a time by the depression, the state was strong enough to overcome two full-blooded revolts by its chief rival, the province of Buenos Aires. Thus Buenos Aires, having at first dominated the fledgling national government in the 1860s, was gradually mastered by it in the 1870s.

La Formación del estado argentino is a welcome addition to the study of a significant if obscure period. Oszlak provides a good account of the financial difficulties that destroyed Urquiza's Confederation in the 1850s. He helps clarify the devious internal bargaining and the intermittent military skirmishes among the provinces, whose dénouement was Mitre's election as president in 1862. He also sheds new light on the formation of a national bureaucracy in the later 1860s, and on the respective roles of military coercion and central government subsidies in gaining the acquiescence of the outer provinces to the new order.

Oszlak is aware of the part played by war in his story, though he might have examined this issue more fully. The American Civil War, for example, remote though it seemed from the River Plate, made a substantial indirect contribution to the political settlement of 1862. World cotton shortages sent wool prices rocketing. The war pushed a new generation of British merchants (and soon after, British railway builders and financiers) to Argentina in search of wool, surrogate export markets and investment opportunities. Fortunes made by landowners, speculators and merchants from wool, and the national government's rapidly growing resources from trade, helped glue the new political system together. As Argentina ceased to profit from the American Civil War in 1865, it leapt into its own war against Paraguay. This time cattle ranchers, salted beef producers, horse traders and cowboys arrived in migrant farm colonists profiteered supplying Argentina and Brazilian troops in Paraguay. Brazil, most of whose men and supplies passed through Buenos Aires en route to Paraguay, had these same supplies taxed by the Argentine government; also much of what the Brazilians bought in Argentina, they paid for in gold. Lastly, at the end of the war with Paraguay in 1870, Argentine exporters enjoyed a third if brief boom on the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war.

War strengthened the State by enriching it. War also became the instrument to destroy residual domestic opposition to unification as Mitre's followers annihilated the vestiges of *caudillo* rule. The civil wars of the 1860s and early 70s in Argentina resembled the consolidation of the *porfiriato* in Mexico around 1880. In both cases the emergence of a centralized oligarchy was an outcome of export-led growth, expanding urbanization and the infusion of foreign capital.

Matsushita's monograph on the labour movement during the 1930s and early 40s, when the Argentine working class became both nationalist and Peronist (and remained so thereafter), explores near-virginal territory for the years 1930-43, and for 1943-45 adds depth

and originality to the substantial literature dealing with the rise of Perón. The study begins with the attempt to unite a small and fragmented trades union movement through the founding of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) in 1930. Matsushita then documents attempts under the Uriburu military dictatorship of 1930-1 – the outcome of Argentina's first twentieth-century military coup – to bring organized labour into a system of corporatist representation, a scheme destroyed by Uriburu's fall from power. Matsushita also examines labour legislation under Uriburu's constitutional successor, General Agustín P. Justo, concluding that this conservative government, despite the prevailing depression, enacted more social legislation than any administration before Perón's. Meanwhile, during the early 1930s, depression predictably weakened the labour movement still further, while for some time doing little to alter its structure or ideology. For most of the 1930s the unions kept deliberately aloof from politics, as the labour movement had done almost throughout its history. In a period of substantial unemployment and falling wages, most labour leaders continued to support free-trade doctrines and free-market collective bargaining.

Change began around 1936. The highly unpopular Roca-Runciman trade treaty between Argentina and Britain of 1933, and efforts by British companies in Argentina to defend their solvency during the depression by erecting monopolies and sometimes by bare-faced fraud, kindled economic nationalism among the unions, as it did among other sectors of society. Meanwhile, the hitherto minuscule Argentine Communist Party adopted the Popular Front strategy ordered by Moscow to combat fascism, and subsequently began extending its influence in the unions. An increasing fight from the land and the rise of import-substituting manufacturing began altering the complexion of the urban working class, and soon too the unions. Matsushita also shows that following the outbreak of war in 1939, competing nationalist and Panamerican sentiments for a time divided the labour movement. Panamericanism emerged at a time when import shortages appeared to threaten wages and employment; closer ties with the United States, some believed, would increase the flow of imports, bringing needed capital goods for local manufacturers.

Lastly, Matsushita examines the complex political drama in Argentina from the coup d'état of June 1943 to the great labour demonstration of October 17, 1945, the latter being the critical moment in Perón's conquest of power and the formation of a Peronist labour bloc. In late 1943 and early 1944 Perón began prising Communists out of the unions. At the same time, from his position as Labour Secretary, he began funneling numerous pay and fringe benefits through the unions, enabling them to increase their memberships while simultaneously tightening his grip upon them. Matsushita shows that until around mid-1944 unions were only one among a series of popular institutions Perón sought to co-opt. Only after he had failed to create a multi-class constituency was he obliged to espouse labour as the *columna vertebral* of his movement. His initial aim was thus a broader movement than the more narrowly class-based populism into which Peronism eventually evolved.

The merit of Matsushita's book lies in its sensitivity to detail. Close scrutiny of date enables him to demolish conclusively the traditional interpretation of Peronist nationalism associated with the late Gino Germani. The latter argued that working-class nationalism was essentially Perón's own invention, the ideological component of a style of charismatic leadership used to politicize the migrant urban proletariat created by import-substitution. To my mind Germani's account has always possessed a somewhat patronizing if not implicitly racist edge. The general picture we have from him is that Perón "duped" a passive mass of ignorant *mestizo* ex-farm workers through "nationalist demagoguery". But as Matsushita shows, nationalism predated migration; it grew spontaneously in the mid-1930s rather than emerging as indoctrination *de haut en bas* after 1943; nationalism also rooted itself in the "old" proletariat before the "new", and among

Handwritten note in the right margin: "The functions of war" (written vertically).



numerous veteran, often foreign-born labour leaders.

Carlos Escudé's book on the Argentina-Britain-United States triangle in the 1940s is among the best studies in Argentine modern history to appear in recent years. In the late 1930s numerous economic and social indicators (per capita GDP, education, life expectancy, for example) placed Argentina at a similar level as leading western European nations. It stood only a little behind France and the Low Countries, and far ahead of Italy, Austria or Japan. By contrast, by 1973 (and still more strikingly by 1983) Argentina had slumped behind every European country except Portugal, and was being rapidly surpassed by several of its Latin American neighbours. We may agree with Escudé that such decline is almost "unprecedented in the modern world", to go a little further, the same decline has had a crucial bearing on current political conditions, and on events like the leftist rebellion of the 1970s or the Falklands war of 1982.

Escudé belongs to a growing band of historians (Jorge Fodor and Mario Rapoport in Argentina, C.A. MacDonald and to a degree R.A. Humphreys in Britain), who trace Argentina's decline to the international convulsions of the 1940s, whose outcome was American leadership in both western Europe and Latin America. Until 1940 Argentina subsisted as an informal "Sixth Dominion" of the British empire. If it no longer received much capital from Britain (such investment having almost ceased in 1913), it remained one of Britain's largest trading partners. Similar, if quantitatively less important, commercial links also bound Argentina to continental Europe. In Argentina such connections had helped form a society with numerous colonial features, but in spite of a semi-colonial identity it was a wealthy and prosperous nation.

In the 1940s the old order, and Argentina's prosperity, suddenly vanished. The stress of war and then post-war American competition shattered its traditional European links. As an alternative to exporting agricultural goods or meat, Argentina sought to industrialize. As it did so, however, it found itself increasingly reliant on foreign earnings from its traditional agro-pastoral exports to finance imports of raw materials and industrial capital goods. As a result not only was Argentina unable to subvert its older guise as a neo-colonial farm exporter, but foreign exchange shortages impaired its capacity to pursue industrialization. The country already lay at the point of ruin in 1949, when a balance of payments crisis forced Perón to abandon a Five-Year Plan for industrialization adopted in 1946. Indeed since 1949, Argentina has stumbled from one crisis to another. Stop-go cycles, secular stagnation and inflation have plagued its economy. Instability and violence have overshadowed its politics, as the country oscillated wildly and uncontrollably between populism and military tyranny.

Escudé's analysis of the 1940s alters tradi-

tional interpretations in several ways. First it perceives exogenous conditions as more instrumental in Argentina's post-war decline than domestic ones, and it therefore rejects an entrenched view that blames the decline on Perón alone. More crucial than Perón was the decay of Argentina's European partnerships, and its failure to find a substitute alignment with the United States. Second, revisionists also depict Argentina's adoption of industrialization (and the rise of Peronism as the political instrument to pursue that commitment), more as a response to the disarticulation of pre-war external partnerships than a cause of such disarticulation. Argentina sought to industrialize largely because it had little other option; Perón did not so much destroy Argentina, as fail to rescue it.

Third, revisionists reject a long-held view that successive wartime governments were fascist sympathizers, refusing to abjure neutrality because they hoped for a German victory. Several historians have demonstrated, Escudé among them, that only the United States wanted Argentina in the war. They wanted this less for military reasons, than to further the goal of American hegemony in Latin America. But the British preferred neutrality, partly to protect meat cargoes from U-boat attacks, but also because neutrality would help keep Argentina in the British sphere of influence and out of the American. Among Argentines themselves, neutrality was anti-American rather than pro-fascist. It was symptomatic of an effort to hold the old European link, or failing this to seek "economic independence" through industrialization, and an awareness of the potential destructiveness of subjection to the United States. Argentina thrived while it could export to a meat and grain-deficient Europe; it would likely collapse if tied to a country in which such goods were abundant and heavily protected from external competition. To the charge that Argentina was pro-German, which they depict as little more than American propaganda, revisionists would ask what had Argentina to gain from a German victory? From mid-1941 it grew apparent that Hitler intended to convert Russia and the Ukraine into the granaries of a Nazi-controlled Europe. With Germany Argentina would enjoy scarcely a more complementary relationship than with the United States.

Escudé develops these and related issues further and more provocatively than any of his revisionist predecessors. He attributes Argentina's post-war decline to "severe and constant (economic) boycott and political destabilization" by the United States. Indeed before the war animosities between Argentina and the United States already had a long history. Since 1890 Argentina had recurrently undermined American pretensions at diplomatic and economic leadership in Latin America. As a preeminently white European nation, Escudé argues, Argentina had its own imperialist ambitions in South America and a matching

sense of Manifest Destiny. The outcome was severe friction between Argentines and Americans centred on competing bids for hemispheric status (*Prestigefrage*). By the late 1930s relations between the two nations had deteriorated still further. To defend both its European links and its claims for Latin American leadership, Argentina continually rebuffed Roosevelt's Good Neighbour policy in Latin America, and the Panamerican defence projects sponsored by the United States. But it did this. Argentina gathered some formidable enemies in the United States government, led by Roosevelt's Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. For Hull American hemispheric supremacy, and control over the Latin American markets, was an important element in the United States' strategy for recovery from the depression; if Argentina continued to resist such supremacy, Argentina had to be destroyed.

After 1939 Escudé's story is largely one of American efforts to coerce Argentina into submission by a mix of bribes, threats, boycotts and propaganda. He observes that the ill-treatment meted out to Argentina was far more severe than that received by other dubious neutrals, Spain for example. He illustrates the political in-fighting among adherents of different policies towards Argentina in Washington, including the celebrated conflict between Hull, the intractable hardliner, and the more flexible and pragmatic Sumner Welles. He also shows that British opposition to undue pressure on Argentina consistently thwarted American policy, and may even have headed off an American-led invasion, while allowing Argentina to uphold its neutrality till the eve of Germany's capitulation.

Lastly, Escudé examines the post-war period, during which American hostility, now directed against Perón, continued unabated. He chronicles Ambassador Spruille Braden's spectacular efforts to prevent Perón's election as president in early 1946. He alleges that during much of 1945-7 the United States denied coal and oil supplies to Argentina, a boycott designed to sabotage Argentina's food shipments to Europe even at the risk of European famine. Later, on the inception of the Marshall Plan, American officials in the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) repeatedly refused to allow dollar purchases of foodstuffs by Europeans from Argentina. Their intent, Escudé claims, was to "bring Argentina to its knees". At this point he also castigates the British for reimposing sterling inconvertibility in August 1947. While its still substantial sterling earnings were convertible, Argentina could employ such earnings to buy from the United States and pursue the industrial programme. But with inconvertible sterling, it could buy virtually nothing. Finally, Escudé draws on more traditional analysis to attack Perón. He agrees that Perón's discriminatory pricing policies disrupted post-war Argentinian agriculture, and by reducing foreign earn-

ings still further, such policies helped to abort industrialization. He also laments Perón's "unnecessary" nationalization of the country's British-owned railways, a measure that disrupted a large foreign exchange that could much better have been spent a few years later on imports for local industry from Britain.

If not wholly original, this study is exceptionally well nourished by careful and comprehensive examination of both British and American diplomatic sources. Despite its emphasis and sometimes tendentious argument, the book frequently betrays an attractive agnosticism. At times, though the British too eventually become a butt for his criticism, Escudé appears an old-style Argentine conservative yearning for what he depicts as a golden age when Argentina was happily, if always unofficially, ensconced in the British empire. If such an aspiration appears strange in view of recent relations between the two countries, Escudé obviously believes they have much more in common than whatever spurious issues currently divide them. He is at pains to show that not only Argentina but also Britain lost heavily from the emergence of an American-led international order, and in this respect he evokes some sectors of the British Left.

Errors of exaggeration, misrepresentation and omission repeatedly mar this book. Escudé glamorizes and inflates pre-1940 Argentina, while despite maintaining its European links had manifested numerous symptoms of stagnation and political instability since the 1920s. Important as they were, Argentina's decline is much more than a matter of international complementarities alone. Despite its size and potential resources, Argentina was never much more than third-rate in the international order, perhaps richer or economically healthier than Spain or Italy but never remotely as significant. I am thus reluctant to accept Escudé's notion of competing "Manifest Destinies" or *Prestigefrage* as an objectively serious issue in Argentine-American relations. Throughout, the United States had at least twofold Argentina's population, and an economy around twenty times the size.

His misrepresentation of American policy after the war reaches comic proportions. Who else could pretend that petty spite towards Argentina rather than fundamental economic and security interests shaped post-war American policies? The Marshall Plan and its agricultural component, the ECA, were meant both to rescue western Europe but also to forestall a relapse into depression in the United States. Obviously in American eyes it was more important to revive American farmers, if necessary by handing over the European markets, than to assist Perón. If as a result of American farm goods replacing Argentine in Europe, Perón's programmes failed and Argentina was left floundering, this was a minuscule price to pay by comparison with the recovery of the West.

## Settling the South

Dervla Murphy

**MICHAEL JAMES MAINWARING**  
*From The Falklands To Patagonia: The Story of A Pioneer Family*  
288pp. Allison and Busby, £12.95.  
085014882

Michael Mainwaring has been fascinated by Patagonia since his student days at St George's College, Buenos Aires. In 1966, while holidaying in the province of Santa Cruz, he met Mabel Halliday de Miller, the last surviving child of William Halliday, who had settled in Patagonia in 1885. Mrs Miller was still living in the wooden house where she had been born seventy-eight years earlier and she lent Mr Mainwaring the Halliday family's diaries, documents and photographs. He then decided to study the area's history more fully "in order to understand the details and significance of her family's achievement", and when the Falklands war aroused public interest in the South Atlantic it seemed the time was propitious for the publication of this book.

William Halliday was born in Dumfries in 1845, the only son of a tailor. At the age of

sixteen he heard that the Falkland Island Company was looking for young shepherds and persuaded his parents to allow him to emigrate. The Company offered free passage and accommodation, a reasonable wage and a small pension after twenty years' work. William neither drank nor smoked and the Falklands offered no tempting luxuries. By 1882 he had qualified for his pension and saved a modest sum, though the FIC paid no interest on the money he regularly deposited with them. As he was enterprising, energetic and reliable, the Company offered to extend his contract. But he had a wife (also from Dumfries) and several children to support, and he saw that the Falkland Islands' prosperity was already declining. Moreover, "it was impossible for him or any other shepherd to purchase or lease even the smallest piece of land. All available pastures on both the main islands had long ago been allocated to a few individuals and chiefly to FIC itself which owned ten large farms". So William resolved to migrate to Southern Patagonia as a pioneer sheep farmer.

The Hallidays (parents, seven children and Mary Halliday's father, William McColl) were the first settlers in the uncharted and almost

unexplored region of the Gallegos Valley; in 1885 the children's ages ranged from nine months to ten years. When this remarkable family landed on the coast their nearest European neighbour was a German living forty miles away in a tent. Their nearest town was Punta Arenas, 120 miles away on the Straits of Magellan. No one could guess when the next ship would visit the Río Gallegos, on the banks of which they had chosen to settle. And during their first night in Patagonia a spring tide swept away most of the possessions they had brought from Port Stanley, leaving them to start their new life equipped only with a large kattle, a Singer sewing-machine and a box of tools.

This book tells the story of a particular success and a general failure. The Hallidays' survival shows the triumph of fortitude, ingenuity and affectionate family co-operation over an incomparable combination of hardships and handicaps. The settlement of Patagonia must however be judged a failure - and a tragedy - from our vantage-point. Mainwaring tells us that now "there is a strong feeling among settlers of Patagonia that it has never lived up to its potential, that it still does not readily welcome visitors. Although representing 25 per

cent of Argentina's land-surface, it still contains only 2 per cent of its population". Yet those comparatively few intruders have caused the once-numerous Tehuelche Indians to become extinct; the last died in 1948. In 1900, the British Consul in Punta Arenas reported that some farmers paid £1 a head to Indian killers, a few of whom were British.

Mainwaring uses one family's history as a peg on which to hang much interesting information about the exploration and settlement of Patagonia, about the Indians and the wildlife (which of course shared in the extermination of unwanted creatures), about the terrain and climate and economy - such as it is. But he presents all this diligently gathered material without apparent enthusiasm, plodding from chapter to chapter and quoting extensively from long-forgotten reminiscences of early travellers - most of whose accounts deserve to be forgotten, on the evidence of the extracts given here. Despite his own knowledge of the region, he fails to convey the feel of Patagonia, or goes he bring the Halliday family to life. One suspects that the diaries and documents lent by Mrs Miller provided only a flimsy framework.

## Trial of the hero

Toby Fitton

**JOHN MASTERS**  
*Man of War*  
346pp. Michael Joseph, £8.95.  
018728603

The late John Masters's twenty-fifth published book has some of the qualities of its predecessors: clarity and convincing army dialogue, meticulously-developed background against which military initials, acronyms, orders and personal carry conviction, and a capacity for telling a swirling good story at a spanking pace. But *Man of War* has serious defects of structure to set against the virtues we have long expected of Masters. The military narrative is punctuated by wooden passages of domestic or natural description, and a peculiar technique produces, out of order chronologically, a series of retrospective vignettes that turn the book into a jumble of short stories of the old *Blackwood's Magazine* type. Episodes are linked by exasperating cadenzas ("He wrenched his mind away from the distant past. England lay before the ship's bows and, soon, Spain"), and they produce anachronisms such as the hero's being designated DSO thirty pages, three chapters, and seven years before he won his medal in a *play* little shindig on the North-West Frontier.

Anomalies like this would have mattered less if the burden of the novel had not been the severity of attention to detail in ensuring that the hero is fully prepared for his destiny as a great commander in battle. The "co-ordination of all arms" matters as much in fiction as in life, the relationship of anti-aircraft emplacement to tank movements, which is made much of here. Details stand out, for example the notes to the effect that the packs of the hero's platoon contain no button-sticks (his is a rifle regiment), and they wear horn buttons, not steel, and that the inspecting officers discourage frequent egg menus in their men's diet because of sulphurous farts in the barrack room. In spite of his military learning, though, Masters is far from perfect. It was unwise to make a special point of the name of Admiral Sir Robert Reginald Ranfurly Plunkett-Erle-End-Dar, GCB, when the man was called Reginald Aylmer Ranfurly (*et multa cetera*) and held a KCB.

But Miller, of humble Wiltshire origin, is a natural soldier, commissioned in the field during the First World War, who spends the whole of his inter-war period preparing himself with exemplary thoroughness for the next great conflict. He must be well-found in the military theory of Boney Fuller and the *RUSI Journal*,

reinforced with a Staff College course (messed up by the jealous machinations of a socially superior officer who knew himself to have been detected in cowardice during battle). Miller must also undergo baptism by fire, dealing moderately with civil disorder in Bhipur and with the General Strike in dockland London, cunningly with a nasty ambush in North-West India, and experimentally with a tactically instructive period as a temporary officer in Franco's army.

Ordeals must be faced in his private life, of love and two marriages (one to the colonel's flighty daughter, the other to an artistic lady who was sometime a cast-off mistress of Picasso's, no less). He must face temptation, once from the deceitful importunities of a senior officer's randy wife, once from the lucrative offers of Sir Oswald Mosley and an industrialist backer. Minor tribulations occur, such as the threat of being bowler-hatted (or flat-capped) as the secretary of a golf club; but, great or small, Miller faces his trials tactically and rationally, with the assistance of a miscellaneous troupe of friends and advisers. These associates, picked up in the course of twenty years' eventful service, include a sympathetic Indian with Congress Party connections, a Jewish refugee psychiatrist and mountaineer who intrudes a bit of soul into the proceedings, a British general of advanced views who becomes a guardian angel, and a German colonel encountered (on the same side) in Spain, who acts as the reverse. All have their appointed roles, and the minor characters can be ticked off like the stages of an algal equation as the narrative proceeds.

When the time for battle comes, our hero is a proven thoroughbred at the peak of performance, ready for command and for further promotion in the field. "It's the little details that matter in battle, Miller", General Gort remarks to him during a troop inspection; and John Masters spares us few details. To be savoured to the full, the narrative requires an ordnance map of Belgium, a compass and a stopwatch, though even to a reader without field experience or surveying equipment, Miller's successful duel with a marauding Stuka has a painfully obvious tactical as well as moral significance when the German aircraft falls to the Colonel's Bren gun.

At the end of the book, after having helped to retard the German advance, our avowedly wounded hero is left bobbing around Dunkirk harbour on a life-raft, tended by his loyal old RSM. Whether he is dead or merely unconscious is not entirely clear, but *Reviresca* could well have been written on his cap-badge.

## Submarine pressure

Michael Trend

**ALEXANDER FULLERTON**  
*The Torch Bearers*  
286pp. Michael Joseph, £8.95.  
0121 72763

The English naval novel lives on in fine style: Alexander Fullerton - who has been favourably compared to C. S. Forester - has now produced *The Torch Bearers*, the eighth of his historical novels, which have taken the maverick Nick Everard from the Battle of Jutland to the last Second World War. The pounding action, the atrocious weather conditions of the Atlantic, the U-boat pack closing in every night, the strain of the ocean upon man and machine, the reader can page after page; the author's terse style combines with a detailed and convincing knowledge of the modern ways of the sea.

In late 1942, when the operation to land American and British troops in the north-west of Africa - "Torch" - was about to be put into action, great anxiety was caused by the submarine number of U-boats positioned around the Azores and Madeira. The threat: they could sink 650 ships at sea (many of which were troop-carriers) was relieved as the submarine force was drawn after a large convoy by the Sierra Leone, which, in Churchill's words, was "severely mauled". The war leader commented: "In the circumstances this could

Fullerton has taken this event as the basis for his story, although his convoy is heading from Sierra Leone to Britain rather than the other way round, and he adds that he has come across no evidence for the convoy's "timely passage through those waters being anything but fortuitous". In the marvellous tale that he has spun from these beginnings, however, the convoy is offered up to the Germans as bait to draw off the U-boat force; it is Nick Everard's job to command as best as he can in these circumstances the deliberately scant defences that have been allocated to guarding the ships. Meanwhile, under the roaring billows waits Kapitänlantant Max Looft, ace ship-killer, who has orders to sink the entire convoy: "The Black Pit must swallow it."

Fullerton's novel makes much of how people deceive one another and themselves, both in terms of the progress of the war and in his characters' inner lives; his main theme, though, is courage - especially the courage, or the lack of it, of the individual in the face of danger. No stereotyped hero or villain, both the main figures display exemplary courage to the world at large, but Everard lacks the nerve to find out if, as he fears, his wife is by an unlucky chance aboard one of the all-too-vulnerable ships in his convoy. Looft, beneath the victory smile that accompanies his "kill", and for which his young men worship him, knows that he is beginning to crack under the great submarine pressure.

## Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

**KENDAL J. PEEL**  
*The Twelfth Night of Ramadan*  
229pp. Heinemann, £7.95.  
0434 580805

Daniel Schofield, a dissatisfied Englishman who runs a landscape gardening enterprise in Saudi Arabia, idly works out a crime which will put him straight into the Guinness Book of Records. But when the ruler of Saudi Arabia calls on the Arab states to open a Jihad against Israel, Schofield's plan suddenly becomes part of a much wider political and financial intrigue. There's perhaps a turn or two too many in the plot and action, but the setting and background are superb: the author's Arabs are far more convincing than Le Carré's. If this is, as it seems to be, a first novel, it's an impressive one.

**JOHN MCNEIL**  
*Little Brother*  
251pp. Century, £7.95.  
0712600744

Toby Sorenson, in charge of security at a large electronics firm outside Boston, becomes sidetracked from his main concerns when he discovers how far a bright orange home micro-computer called Possum has taken over his ten-year-old son's life. A topical subject, related with enough technical detail and conviction to get most parents' hair standing on end. But with the final twist, unfortunately, the book goes over the top and the programme crashes.

**W. J. BURLEY**  
*Wycliffe and the Beales*  
184pp. Gollancz, £6.95.  
0575 033223

Detective Chief Superintendent Wycliffe investigates two murders in a small village on the edge of Dartmoor, crimes apparently connected with the past history of the Beales, the family who own the large house in the village. This is W. J. Burley at his most Simeonesque: the gradual absorption of a new, strange domestic atmosphere; the solution emerging, finally, not so much through logical ratiocination as from a sudden, intuitive perception. One of his best for some time.

**REGINALD HILL**  
*Traitor's Blood*  
256pp. Collins, £8.50.  
0002226871

To avoid prosecution on charges of embezzlement and illegal arms dealing, Antonio Lemuel Bressat Sebastian Stanhope-Swift, 6th Viscount Bessacarr, has taken up residence in Venezuela. When he learns that he is dying of cancer he returns home to see his daughter, but is picked up by the police and then blackmailed by MI6 into assisting them with a plot to assassinate his own father. And that's just for starters. Plot is perhaps a touch complex, and prodigally crammed with incident, but, like all Reginald Hill's books, it reads exceedingly well.

**JOSEPH WAMBAUGH**  
*The Delta Star*  
276pp. Macdonald, £8.95.

Joseph Wambaugh, formerly in the Los Angeles Police Department, exchanged the nightstick for the pen some ten years ago. Rightly, too, for his steamy, seamy novels of police life in Los Angeles are brilliantly written, hilariously funny, and succeed in making the nightstick look like Enid Blyton. In *The Delta Star*, homicide detective Mario Villalobos is trying to find out why someone pushed hooker Missy Moonbeam off the roof of the Wonderland Hotel, but the plot has to force its way through a lot of frenzied street action and a number of drunken skull sessions at Leery's Saloon, where the cops hang out. Here a bumper sticker over the bar mirror reads "Conan the Barbarian for Police Chief", and Ludwig the police dog snores gently on the pool table as The Bad Czech hyperventilates with rage against the governor of California.

**MICHAEL KENYON**  
*A Free-Range Wife*  
211pp. Collins, £6.75.  
0002313642

The bard of New Scotland Yard, Chief Inspector Henry Peckover, is ruralizing in south-west France while his wife acts as locum for the Scottish chef of an expensive French hotel. When it appears that this chef has decided to strew the countryside with the mutilated bodies of his wife's former boyfriends, Henry, being on the spot, is asked to look into things and have a quiet word with the wife. Mercy McCluskey is tall, blonde and neurotic, and Henry falls for her like a ton of bricks: which complicates subsequent developments. Some good knockabout comedy - Michael Kenyon's forte - is accompanied by an impasto use of local colour, and a great deal of browsing and sluicing (mainly sluicing). Some detection is to be found in the interstices.

**PETER WHALLEY**  
*The Mortician's Birthday Party*  
188pp. Macmillan, £6.50.  
0333 353455

Peter Whalley's first novel, *Post Mortem*, revealed a nice sense of humour. His second develops the vein, and adds to it a pleasing strain of gruesomeness as George Webster, a mortician in the northern town of Arncaster, broods on ways of getting rid of a disagreeable and adulterous wife. Neat plot, cleverly narrated.

**WALTER WINWARD**  
*The Last and Greatest Art*  
281pp. Hamish Hamilton, £8.95.  
0241 11218

Alex Duncan, formerly of MI6, compulsorily retired without a pension some years ago, is called back to the firm after his brother, a journalist working in New York, is murdered while researching neo-Nazi groups in the States. It's all tied up with the CIA, the KGB, and a few other intelligence agencies as well. The intricacy of the intrigue makes a le Carré plot look like Peter Rabbit, but the action is reasonable and the conversations are civilized.

**PETER INCHBALD**  
*Short Break in Venice*  
206pp. Collins, £6.75.  
0002313856

This is Peter Inchbald's third novel about Chief Inspector Franco Corti of Scotland Yard's Art and Antiques Squad. It begins in Venice: Corti, on holiday with his wife, comes across a gang of anti-semitic jewel thieves who only rob Jewish jewellers, leaving Nazi graffiti behind them. But their activity isn't confined to Italy: the action moves to London, to the West Country, and then returns to Venice, where it concludes in a welter of violence. Inchbald's hero, a short-legged Hackenschmidt schizoprenically split between his English upbringing and Italian blood, is a strong and an unusual enough figure to hold most plots together, but he has a hard row to hoe here. At the end of the novel his father's will is sorted out, he comes into a large sum of money, and contemplates retirement from the force. It would be a great pity were we to lose Corti, but a move into another sphere might be no bad idea.

**R. B. DOMINIC**  
*A Flaw in the System*  
192pp. Macmillan, £6.95.  
0333 358074

Ohio congressman Ben Safford unwittingly, and solely to oblige his sister, takes up the case of a young pilot found guilty of negligence after crashing a VX-90, the USAF's new wonder fighter. To his surprise Ben finds himself taking the lid off one of the oastleest cans of worms he's seen for some time, involving the State Department, Defence, some Saudi Arabian diplomats, and one of the largest aircraft firms in the States. R. B. Dominic is, as is well known, another name for Emma Lathen: like all books written by both authors, *A Flaw in the System* is a good story told with dry wit and in a crisp, cool and civilized manner.



# Strategies of survival

Ernest Gellner

JOHN WHELPTON  
Jang Bahadur in Europe: The First Nepalese Mission to the West.  
320pp. Katmandu: Sahayogi Press. Nepalese rupees, 60.

The State of Nepal is approximately the same size as the United States of America. There, you might add, the resemblance ends. Not so. Both, in curious and contrasted ways, were offshoots of the British Empire. At the very time at which the British were losing an empire on the North American mainland, they were also acquiring another one on the Indian subcontinent. At the very moment when a new polity was forming in America, intent on separating from England in the name of perpetuating its political principles, another one was being forged in the Himalayas, destined to rally to the British, thereby perpetuating principles of political organization which are profoundly un-British.

Each of these new states was destined to wage an unsuccessful war against Britain during the second decade of the nineteenth century, though the Nepalese defended their capital more effectively than did the Americans. Both Nepal and the US were (Nepal in good measure continues to be) frontier states, organized around the expanding frontier of a great civilization. Their techniques differ somewhat, in so far as one of them puts tribes on reservations, and the other turns them into castes. Admittedly, the numerical ratio of settler to tribesman was different, and the social implications of turning the Great Plains from buffalo-hunting to wheat are quite different from those of turning the lower valleys of the Himalayas from slash-and-burn to rice. All the same, there clearly is some parallel between the Hindu who followed the implicit injunction "Go North-East, Young Man" when fleeing the Muslims, and those who followed the explicit advice to "Go West" when escaping oppression and poverty in Europe.

In other words, a Marxist sociologist or anthropologist wishing to understand the changes which had befallen Earth between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries could hardly do better than to choose two contrasted, indeed polar, samples: If America was the future, where equality was being tested as the new fundamental principle, then Nepal was the paradigmatic Asiatic state, pushing back the frontier of a caste-based civilization. Louis Dumont has had the brilliant idea of doing a Tocqueville-in-reverse, and using the Indian subcontinent as the case-study of a society based on pervasive hierarchy. Nepal, as another French scholar, Sylvain Lévi, had noted early this century, is the moving frontier of this civilization, an "India in the making".

Nepal probably remains the nearest thing available for direct observation of the traditional Asian state. But how did it manage to survive so long, to possess a bicentennial anniversary so close to that of the Americans? Had it been a fully paradigmatic Asian state, operating in the traditional context, its longevity probably would not have been as great. It almost certainly would not now be ruled by the same dynasty as the one which had established it in the eighteenth century. It would have been a victim of its own success. Its expansion would have led to ambiguous and exposed frontiers, where Lords of the Marches would have been either strong and hence independent or weak and hence ineffective. It might well have been tempted to shift its centre of gravity to more comfortable but less defensible locations, where eventually others would have done unto it what it had done unto others.

In fact, rulers adopted the correct strategy of survival, to use Leo Rose's term for Nepalese policy: an alliance with the strongest power in the West, combined with maximum insulation from it. They borrowed its simpler weapons, allowed it to recruit mercenaries (as they still do), but otherwise imposed and enforced stringent restrictions on entry of foreigners, and saw to it that means of communication with the outside world were not developed. Nature of course helped, in the form of glaciers on one side and extremely mountainous forest on the other. Only since 1951, as a consequence of Indian independence, has

this insulation been eroded.

The rulers who chose the correct strategy did not simply hit upon it by luck; it wasn't just a matter of being situated in a buffer zone. The strategy was not self-evident, and there were indeed some who urged alternative courses. Nor, on the other hand, did the Nepalese really understand what it was that had hit Asia. But they did understand it sufficiently well to be able to bring off a most interesting feat, namely, to harness the winds of change so as to stabilize and protect an absolute oriental monarchy. (They weren't simply, like the princely states proper, an appendage of the British Raj, and the continued survival of an independent Nepal, in contrast with the disappearance of the princely states, is not just a consequence of its technical and previously ambiguous independence in international law, but rather of a genuine social reality.) Anyone eager to know how it was achieved at the micro-level, how the Himalayan communities were tied to the state by the strangely attractive ideology of caste (Muslim states rely on the local communities to dissipate themselves on honour and violence, Hindu ones on purity and snobbery), by needing it to ratify emergent caste ranking, by Rice-and-Peace, opportunities of mercenary service, and relatively low taxation, will have to turn to anthropological studies or to social historians. But anyone eager to get an understanding and a feel of how it was done at the centre, could hardly do better than to study the remarkable and entertaining book under review.

In 1850, the most important of the nineteenth-century Nepalese rulers, Bahadur Jang, visited Britain and Europe. It was he who established the Rana regime, destined to last till 1951, in the course of which the Shah dynasty became mere *rois fainéants*. (British opposition saved them from complete elimination, thus making possible their version of a Meiji restoration after the withdrawal of the British from India.) The Rana regime was based on a famous massacre of potential rivals a mere four years prior to the trip, which eliminated some and discouraged the rest. Soon thereafter, the new ruler of a state legitimated by Hinduism, and based on conferring caste on its subjects, chose nevertheless to violate the Hindu prohibition on sea travel, and to visit the new centre of power in London. He kept a diary, which apparently has not survived, but was used in a biography of the ruler written by his son, and published in India in 1909, as well as in another subsequently published in Nepal in Katmandu in 1957. The identity of its author is unknown. The present volume consists of a translation of the latter work by John Whelpton, and long introductory chapters and notes by Whelpton and a Nepalese scholar, Rishikesh Shah.

Bahadur Jang learnt a great deal from his visits to Jivapur (Gibraltar), Sautanghat (Southampton), Belait City (London), bagel (Vauxhall - treated as a generic term, as in Russian), Plima (Plymouth), and Prámadí (Birmingham). He noted parliamentary government and the rule of law, though mistaking some of its bases:

The Parliament Council does not tolerate wrongdoing on anyone's part. They can even replace the sovereign... a man's rank is of no account if he does wrong... The law establishing this powerful house of God was drawn up by the old ancestor of the English, Jesu Christ.

But he made no mistakes about fundamentals: "Getting dressed, eating, keeping appointments, sleeping, getting up or going out - everything is determined by the clock. Where you look, there you see a clock." And more important still:

No one can be sure about the world-wide situation, but from what information is available it seems that now-a-days the powerful sovereigns are the ones who adopt English methods. For their technological... their monetary system are all surreptitiously copied.

He then goes on to discuss the case of Ranjit Singh in the Punjab, who also combined a wary and ambiguous alliance with the British, with an attempt to borrow their military technology. But he did not ensure cohesion of his household and army, so that their disunity subsequently caused the disintegration of his realm. Jang Bahadur notes with evident approval, however, that

On the surface (Singh) remained on good terms with the English but at the same time he was building up

his own strength, so that... they dared not move against him... The study of other countries' experience brings knowledge and understanding which should be used to form a correct assessment of one's own king's power.

This book is not merely the account of a unique trip, it is also a political testament or programme of a talented, reflective oriental prince (and as it happens, a ruthless one). One interesting instance where he projects rather than observes, is when he lists amongst the duties of the British monarch "always to be happy". Europeans may wish happiness on their rulers but do not actually consider it a positive obligation. I suppose this revealing remark illustrates Clifford Geertz's "exemplary state" thesis.

The book highlights the manner and context in which Jang Bahadur exorcised and decided on his general policy. He implemented it conspicuously seven years later. Having seen the reserves of British strength in Vauxhall and at the opera, he was not misled by the initial disasters during the Mutiny, and convincingly backed the final winners.

Whelpton and Shah have rendered us a very great service in making this document avail-

## Tribal traditionalism

Thomas Maxwell

BARBARA STOLER MILLER (Editor)  
Exploring India's Sacred Art: Selected Writings of Stella Kramrisch  
356pp University of Pennsylvania Press.  
\$37.50 (paperback, \$14.50).  
0812278659

Stella Kramrisch is Curator of Indian Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and actively pursuing her researches; no hint of retirement has been heard. So a single-handed Festschrift like this, in the form of a short biography with a selection from Dr Kramrisch's own writings, might appear untimely and inappropriate. However, she published her first article over sixty years ago in India and it is time perhaps that more recent generations of students were introduced to the challenge of her fundamental and earlier works, some of which are not easily accessible, while others have never been translated (from the German originals), and still others have long stood in need of revision by the author in the light of later discoveries. Moreover, the 1981 Philadelphia exhibition, "Manifestations of Shiva", motivated by Kramrisch, and her book which appeared at the same time, *The Presence of Shiva* (Princeton, 1981), along with an international symposium, "Discourses on Shiva", must be seen as the highest peak of this remarkable scholar's achievement and personal testament. This multiple *tour de force* could only have been achieved by an individual of extraordinary stature.

Kramrisch is the founder and virtual embodiment of that particular kind of understanding which many - though far from all - specialists in Indian art have come to accept (often without knowing it) as the essential meaning and relevance to the present of historical Indian culture and spiritual enquiry. Her influence on Indian art scholarship has, for the past half-century, been profound and pervasive; some scholars resent this, others are unaware of it. None has escaped it. The book under review is, therefore, both timely and appropriate.

It suffers from two principal defects: the intractability of the designer, Adrienne Osterdock Dudden - purposeless wide margins containing only the page numbers and superfluous subheadings and, in places, photographs smaller than postage stamps - and the uneven, at times frankly appalling, quality of the plates.

Against this tasteless framework, however, Barbara Stoler Miller emerges as an energetic researcher and a willing biographer, determined not to be swamped by the complexities of her subject. The twenty-seven pages, or twenty perhaps, taking into account the empty margins of her "Biographical Essay", contain no breaches of good taste; no symptoms of age; on the other hand, there are no enlightening moments either, and the gaps in such personal material as the essay contains are either obvious or else shade off into references to other writers. Thus in the 1920s "Aloofness

able and illuminating its context. One can only add that today, in 1980, "no one can be sure about the world-wide situation". Nowadays it is rather more difficult to decide precisely whose methods are to be copied (though it is manifest that someone's methods must be copied), or to forecast who will win. Insulation has also ceased to be feasible. Today, a Rana descendant of Jang Bahadur's brother) is a minister once again, thus correcting in some measure the partial reversal of family fortunes which occurred in 1951. He no longer holds a position in virtue of a hereditary right; nor was he obliged to slay his maternal uncle in order to attain high office. Jang Bahadur had apparently stood one of his European guests in front of a portrait and observed "This is my poor uncle... whom I shot; it is very much like him." As well as being, so far as one knows, quite unimpaired by on avuncularism, the present Rana Minister has the further and formidable advantages of having been trained at Haileybury and New College, Oxford. It remains to be seen whether he can read the world situation as effectively as did his forebear.

and social isolation in Calcutta were her response to threats, including amorous advances or open hostilities of several Indian men. She knew that a young, unmarried European woman was considered both enticing and dangerously alien. After receiving a number of threatening letters, she applied to the police for a permit to carry a gun. The reader is then referred to Forster's *A Passage to India* for "an appreciation of the racial and sexual tensions of the period".

There is a good deal of impressive name-dropping (from Diaghilev and Kandinsky to Coomaraswamy and Zimmer) throughout the essay, and the reader pauses at times to wonder if the powerful mind of Dr Kramrisch was really formed almost entirely by encounters with artists, philosophers, aristocrats and intellectuals whose names are now universally familiar. The supremacy of tradition in India - as the author is to be seen to have been - is against the anonymity of the architects, sculptors and artists who for so many centuries kept it alive - is emphasized, and of Kramrisch we are told that "she travelled extensively in India for several years to find and borrow striking examples of tribal and folk art" for her 1968 exhibition, "Unknown India: Ritual Art in Tribes and Villages". One can certainly gain as much understanding from a peasant farmer squatting in the corner of his field, or from a tribal hunter sorting his arrows beside his long-house hearth, as from any textbook on philosophy, at least in Indian studies; yet not one village, guide, headman, clayworker, puppeteer or temple priest is named or noticed in this biographical essay.

Nevertheless, Miller's essay does help us to get some insight into the background of one of the century's outstanding personalities. Some of the encounters and experiences which have helped to form so fertile, creative and demanding a mind are described here, even if Dr Kramrisch does not emerge as an intellectual whole. One is grateful to Professor Miller for her sincerity of purpose.

After Joseph Dye's painstakingly thorough bibliography of Dr Kramrisch's works, which runs to fourteen pages including reviews, the *Selected Writings* begin on page 52. There are sixteen articles or extracts divided into five sections; they are not therefore arranged chronologically, but in fact cover the period 1921-68. They have been updated where necessary, and one translation from the German has passed through two revisions, one by Kramrisch herself. The pieces must be read, or re-read, as an excellent selection, as representative as possible, and each article has been thoroughly revised to standardize transliteration and systems of reference. The individual pieces are strikingly rejuvenated by the uniformity of presentation. What the effect of their reprinting will be is difficult to assess. But every student of Indian art and religion is bound to consider his own standpoint after reading the book, and Indian studies will be the better for it.

## Bifurcation and beyond

Russell Davies

W.L. WEBB (Editor)  
The Bedside "Guardian" 32: A selection from The "Guardian" 1982-83  
230pp. Collins. £8.50.  
0012120228

PATRICK MARNHAM (Editor)  
Night Thoughts: The Spectator Bedside Book  
250pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press.  
Paperback, £4.95.  
070112353X

RONALD TREFLORD (Editor)  
Sunday Best 3: Selections from The Observer  
1982-1983.  
230pp. The Observer/Gollancz. £8.95.  
0130323918

PHILIP FRENCH (Editor)  
The Third Dimension: Voices from Radio 3  
130pp. (limited edition of 1300 copies) The Stationery Press, 219a Victoria Park Road, London, E.9. £12.95.  
0909121082

The English Civil War goes on. There are always Roundheads and Cavaliers of one sort or another raming the country. At any given time there will be somebody storming into print to warn of the dangerous bifurcation of our cultural thrust; whereupon an opponent will splutter into view with a denial that ratifies the antagonism, even if it did not exist before. The most famous example of such a set-to in living memory is the "Two Cultures" pronouncement by C. P. Snow and the two-finger jab to which it was treated by Dr Leavis - there was cultural bifurcation if you like. But out of such battles the nation builds its concord (which in this instance, as we shall see, is taking the unusual form of a wholesale demolition of both combatants in the public esteem).

What we are experiencing now is a revival of Russell's "Two nations... THE RICH AND THE POOR" (quoted, complete with capitals, by Enoch Powell during a Radio Three talk on published in *The Third Dimension*). The "new year" has been restored to our political vocabulary, whence it had been virtually banished (perhaps hypocritically, perhaps out of genuine optimism) for the best part of two decades. We now live in a society where philosophers of unquestioned eminence quite solemnly propose that the poor are, as it were, necessary, because in any honestly-run society there are always going to be large numbers of people who are inadequate to the task of making themselves rich; and furthermore that to relieve such people's condition to the point where the word "poverty" was no longer applicable would be an impermissibly "unfilial" measure. The fact is conveniently ignored that human societies have been, from their inception, heroically "unfilial" constructs, and that no remedy applied to them can hope to be "natural" or "organic".

All this is to place myself, I hope unmistakably, on one side of a new struggle (oparring, as it may be, the Light Heavyweight contest between "Guardian"-reading Liberals and the New Right - the latter group, incidentally, renant a mind are described here, even if Dr Kramrisch does not emerge as an intellectual whole. One is grateful to Professor Miller for her sincerity of purpose.

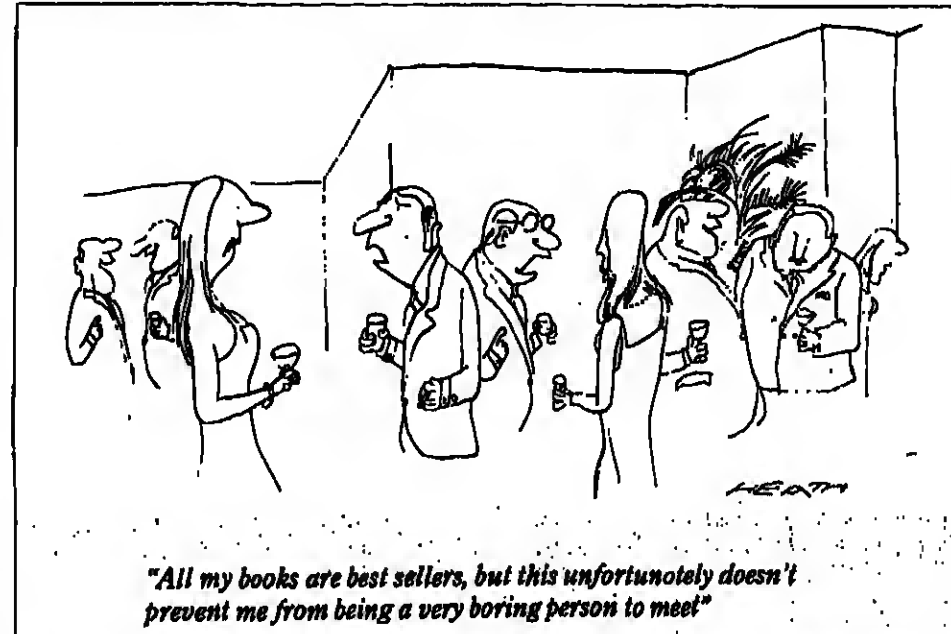
After Joseph Dye's painstakingly thorough bibliography of Dr Kramrisch's works, which runs to fourteen pages including reviews, the *Selected Writings* begin on page 52. There are sixteen articles or extracts divided into five sections; they are not therefore arranged chronologically, but in fact cover the period 1921-68. They have been updated where necessary, and one translation from the German has passed through two revisions, one by Kramrisch herself. The pieces must be read, or re-read, as an excellent selection, as representative as possible, and each article has been thoroughly revised to standardize transliteration and systems of reference. The individual pieces are strikingly rejuvenated by the uniformity of presentation. What the effect of their reprinting will be is difficult to assess. But every student of Indian art and religion is bound to consider his own standpoint after reading the book, and Indian studies will be the better for it.

ers" (the hull's-eye phrase on the New Right target) upon whom they dote.

To say that only religious traditionalism prevents the Old Right from joining the New would be putting the appeal of the liturgy a bit high, but some feeling of that kind is given off by *The Spectator Bedside Book*. Alexander Clunell's attempt to keep the magazine readable from beginning to end have met with a large measure of success; in spite of which the *Spectator* remains best known as the place where Messrs Waugh and Ingrams collide, embrace and intertwine. Both men are writers of admirable fluency, but then it is easy to write well (and I feel this applies to Waugh *père*, too) if from the start one is encouraging oneself to say preposterous things. "Love me, for I am incorrigible" would seem to be the motto (and not an irrelevant one) in both cases. Readers either fall for this, or, distressingly often, waste their energy by objecting to it. For example, Ingrams's creative reinterpretation of facts, and his habit of reviewing not what his (black-and-white) television is transmitting but rather whatever household object happens to be sitting on the set at the time, draws from Bernard Levin one of those apposite solicitor-type

sublimations are in aid of. At present he is having an *inexplicably* good time.

Levin's book reviews in the *Observer* are an attractive feature of a paper which at present seems pushed to find appropriate space (let alone money) to accommodate all the star writers it has engaged. But the system may be worth persevering with, for there is something good from each of these luminaries in *Sunday Best* 3. The most fondly remembered single items here will possibly be Simon Hoggart's delineation of the Prime Minister's day ("She dislikes going to bed because it means she has to stop work"); Clive James's account of Her Majesty's underwater tour of California ("the frogmen were the only people appropriately dressed"); and Concor Cruise O'Brien's piousette around a temporarily unhinged historian ("Double Dacre") which, incidentally, withholds the boot rather gracefully from the soft underbelly of the rival *Sunday Times*. Closer to the spirit of the age than all of these, regrettably, is Ian Walker's memorable piece on the Widnes sulicide, Raffy and Sean; while the New Right pops up gleamingly erect in the person of Dr Roger Scruton, who in his diatribe "Against Feminism", provides what is



Reproduced from The Penguin Book of Private Eye Cartoons, edited by Richard Ingrams (186pp. Penguin, £2.95, 0 1400 6391 9).

letters which by its very existence supplies the beginnings of a justification for Ingrams's provocative approach. The particular objection Levin is making is of an impeccable rightness, but he should have seen that its clubman tones ("I have known nine editors of the *Spectator*, and you are the only one sufficiently lacking in professional self-respect to accept such standards from its contributors") would not fall upon the public ear as a thunderous denunciation, but rather as the beating of tiny fists upon the locked door of a giggling office.

Mr Levin is scarcely to be avoided in collections like these. In the Radio Three anthology, he is discovered in Santa Fe, during one of his epicurean cultural tours. "I have now heard the Mozart Clarinet Quintet on two successive Sundays", he gushes. "Oh yeah?" One is tempted to snarl, "what were they playing?" For this stuff will eventually make phillistines of us all.

Levin's rhapsodic excursions come in a traditional form - they are very much the sort of thing that purple old Victorian blowhards like George Augustus Sala used to do - but coming from Bernard Levin they have a different flavour: a striding, look-I'm-entitled-to-this-tiege which is partly a form of New Rightism (we have met Jettison our consciences and just Enjoy Having) and partly, perhaps, a celebration of Jewish survival. It is impertinent to hazard this, but one is driven to impertinence in the attempt to explain to oneself what Mr Levin really thinks he's up to. Well, in a move which is almost painful to watch, he is making the New Right his glorious superman, and he is going to go along with Mrs Thatcher and the New Right, but unwilling as he is to do so, he is being what kind of Light it is to which he is being witness. Not a religious "too much" compassion. In that, he is a little code-word Im-

probably the most famous new (?) phrase in the book: "the unbilded ambition of the phallus". To some, this suggested Lawrence; others - sidetracked by notions of how one might indeed arrange for the ambition of the phallus to be bridled - were put in mind of Cynthia Payne, the kink-caterer of Streatham. It is entirely to the credit of Blake Morrison, who was entrusted with the not very thrilling task of supplying some sense in reply, that he ignored such picturesque possibilities and concentrated, cunningly, on Scruton's very odd vision of men. "The vagina as stop-cock" was a good countering motto. In the *Spectator*, this exchange might have gone on for weeks, expiring at last in the kind of silliness that offers (in the manner of a draw at chess) an open agreement that the whole thing was hardly worth bothering about in the first place.

Levin's *Observer* contribution - to return momentarily to that - is a review of a book by Philip Snow about his brother C.P., in which the adoring younger brother unwittingly conceals a portrait of "a monster: selfish, vain, grasping and foolish". This appeared in October 1982, the same month, oddly enough, that Professor John Carey gave his talk "Queenie Leavis and the Common Pursuit" on Radio Three. Carey reckons to leave us "less ready to celebrate as entirely auspicious the close and lifelong collaboration which the Leavises, in their dedication of *Dickens the Novelist* to each other, congratulate themselves upon". Which is putting it mildly (as one tries to do on Radio Three). Carey's essay is much the best attempt I have seen to connect the Leavises' famously ratty behaviour with the tenor of their critical enterprise, even though the explanation - that Queenie had the dominant ideas and used her husband's work to channel them into the world; only to complain after his death that it was *she*, the originator, who had in fact been used - takes us into realms of psychological speculation even darker than before.

So thick for the Two Cultures - or as Radio

Three might have had it, the Two Vultures. This confusion did indeed occur not long ago, when John Key's documentary series on modern India, "A Cacophony of Cultures", was misbilled as an ornithological item. It is just conceivable that the *Guardian* printer's gremlin, should he ever be evicted, might find a new home among the Talks and Documentaries in Broadcasting House. For certainly *The Third Dimension* is already famous for a wonderful erratum slip, which reads in its entirety: "On page 100 the thirteenth line should read Malcolm Muggeridge belonged to a small club where he could get a". No better nor more appropriate teaser has ever been inserted in a book - far more inviting than any blurb. Even the numbers seem right. But all in all, the volume is a most elegant production, printed on real paper with ribs and watermarks in it and subject to tiny errors ("Spanish Civil War") of great suggestiveness. From Rachel Trickett's unabashed defence of Sir Walter Scott to Salman Rushdie on Elias Canetti; from Gerald Long on dictionaries (short on patience with some of them) to the fine poems by Charles Causley and Anthony Thwaite, this is a proper book. You would not know - and this is a tribute to the editorship of Philip French - that the pieces had not been written to consort together: except in the singular case of John Sparrow's amiably intolerant outburst "On Dogs", which unlike the other contributions is written as an unmistakable script-for-performance, replete with dashes and three exclamations of "Well!" within a baker's dozen of lines.

As John Fowles implies in a typically tortured introduction, the *Guardian* book can't be expected to hang together: "such juxtapositions in the *Guardian*, between, say, the committed political pieces and those on good restaurants, or wines, or holiday places, or other 'worlds' reserved to the fortunate minority - always disturb me". Mr Fowles seems to want the *Guardian* to resemble the *New Statesman*; and I think not even the NS's subscribers would wish that duplication on themselves. Not at the moment. No, the *Guardian* is necessarily a ragbag, as the human conscience is: its content depends on what there is in the world to feel bad about at the time. Which is one reason why, over the past couple of years, the *Guardian* has been a particularly lively newspaper.

Its twenty-second *Bedside Book* is the least attractively produced of the batch, making for example the annoying mistake of not telling you at the beginning of a piece who wrote it. No doubt there is a purist motive behind this ('of the removal of identification-plates from artworks in galleries, on the theory that viewers are thereby prevented from judging on reputation alone); but in my case it merely leads to a lot of testy thumbing back and forth. Not that it is usually hard to tell James Cameron from Peter Jenkins (only one piece each), or Alan Rusbridger (eight excellent *Diary squibs*) from Nancy Banks-Smith (three reviews, including a gem on Don Shaw's *The Folklands Factor*). The paper's resident Fascist-spotter, Martin Walker, is naturally in an upbeat phase; there being so much promising material to go at, including the resistible Scruton: "I am not battling for the ear or the mind of Mrs Thatcher... Anyway, a woman's emotions are what one battles for." Down, boy.

*Spectator*, *Observer*, *Guardian*, cultural channel of the BBC. Very different institutions; but the odd fact remains that you could bundle all these four effusions of theirs up together in a Christmas parcel and present them, without fear of giving offence, to a British individual of almost any belief or allegiance - just so long as that individual liked books. Being a person interested in Books or a person (as such folk tend to put it) Disinterested in Books is, I would suggest, one of the next cultural divides in store for us. Already large numbers of people are losing faith in the worthlessness of education, and are content instead to be video-entertained. The time may not be far off when those names - *Spectator*, *Observer*, and especially *Guardian* - mean something more urgent than they do at present. As for Radio Three, I cannot imagine that an organization so pleasant to work for will continue so successfully to resist the operation of Sod's Law. Somewhere the Roundheads must be plotting.



# In the land of hyperbole

Julian Symons

BERNARD LEVIN  
Enthusiasm  
264pp. Cape. £8.95.  
0224 021141  
Speaking Up: More of the best of his  
journalism  
267pp. Pan Books. £2.50.  
0330 281208

It is rarely that the first paragraph of a book seems so outstandingly silly that one feels bound to stop and comment on it: but that is the case with Bernard Levin's *Enthusiasm*. "We live in an age in which it is argued that to be happy is frivolous, and expecting to be happy positively childish. To be passionate in a cause provokes widespread embarrassment..." Is Bernard Levin having a little joke with us, like the joke he had with Wedgwood Benn when acting as "a certain colonel" sent by a certain committee to offer Benn a job? (See "Uncertainty Principle" in *Speaking Up*.) Alas, the evidence, 264 pages of it, shows that he really believes he is a rare modern bird in his expectation of happiness and his passion for a cause, or several causes. One can only say that the reverse is true: it would be more nearly accurate to say that we live in an age when happiness is regarded as a right, and passionate support of something or somebody, a pop star or the latest soul-saver out of Katmandu, a duty.

We have not yet done with that opening paragraph. We are told by Levin that it is always good to be enthusiastic: but in fact *enthusiasm* is one of those words that, as Orwell remarked of *democracy, fascism, justice*, have so many meanings that they mean nothing at all without some definition. Many young Germans in the 1930s were enthusiastic about the Nazi régime. Their feelings were idealistic as those of Rupert Brooke, but their enthusiasm led to great evil. Instances could be multiplied but they are surely unnecessary, for the argument is infantile. As Housman almost said:

Berard, this is stupid stuff.  
You eat your victuals fast enough  
and eating is one of the pleasures celebrated

here, sometimes in a drooling manner disconcerting even to enthusiastic meat-eaters like me.

Books, music, food, walking, especially in cities: Bernard Levin is enthusiastic about all these things. He conveys his feelings in a blend of generalizations, clichés and inaccuracies that must surely jar the susceptibilities even of devoted Levinites. "Most people are happy most of the time..." I suppose we all tend to remember only the happiness from our childhood ("Such, Such Were the Joys, as Orwell observed). "I have loved many cats and Tim most deeply..." I do believe that Tim had a soul. This is a writer who slips into clichés on comfortable clothes, who tells us of "balmy evenings when the world is still", when one is "talking of everything in the world", and who when walking carries not a stick but a "noble staff". On a Levin will "the graver questions of the hour do not figure large" (translation: politics isn't talked about) although "the graver questions of all... dominate the welker's thoughts". What are those graver questions? Well, these are times when "the purpose and value of life are weighed, when success and failure are measured", etc. And what are the walker's thoughts about those great questions? "Life-filled, confident and serene". Pages of such stuff are varied by the practical reaction of Plain Man Levin in art galleries. If you stand in silence before Vermeer's "The Servant Pouring Milk" (more often called "The Milkmaid"), he says, "I swear that you can hear the milk trickling into the bowl." He adds that he would like to be able to talk to the kitchen maid in the picture. Whimsical Bernard!

With all this go many minor inaccuracies. Levin suggests that perhaps nothing by Carlyle is in print, when it would have taken only five minutes to discover that the complete works are available, the more famous books in a choice of editions. Even in relation to food he is not always reliable. A visit to a good grocer would have assured him that Tate and Lyle's Golden Syrup still exists, and the Transylvanian Mixed Grill of his Soho youth was not served in Maurer's as he says, but in Greek Street's nearby Budapest. Again, a moment's reflection would have reminded him that the dish is Hungarian, and that Maurer's was a

German restaurant.

*Enthusiasm*, enlarged from some radio talks, is the worst of Bernard Levin: but it contains some of the qualities that have made him an immensely successful journalist, a blend of G. K. Chesterton and the *Daily Mirror's* Cassandra, plus a sprinkling of H. L. Mencken. From Chesterton come the purple passages and the yo-ho-hoing of the rulling English drunkard who made the rolling English road, from Cassandra the raised hortatory finger and the trumpeting about major and minor social evils, from Mencken an occasional burst of invective. The verve, fluency and humour are Levin's own. As *Speaking Up* shows, the fluency is extraordinary. He tells us that at one time he was writing three articles a week for *The Times*, plus a theatre column that involved seeing four plays a week for the *Sunday Times*. When both papers were out of action for a year he swore off journalism, but not for long. The addict has been unable to keep away from print.

The several journalistic Levins vary greatly in merit. The best are domestic political Levin, comic Levin, and discoverer of minor social abuses Levin. The piece on Benn already mentioned is both funny and a sharp comment on that politician's invariable vagueness. It is as good as the Parliamentary pieces written by Levin as "Taper" of the *Spectator* near the beginning of his career. A review of a book about the USSR Supreme Soviet, a newspaper story about the refusal of musicians in Newark to play at an Inland Revenue party, are all lightly, effectively comic. Some of the political pieces, like that arguing against participation in the Soviet Olympic Games, are finely forceful. On the other hand an article about Blunt shows an ignorance of ideas and beliefs in the 1930s that makes sensible comment impossible. The theatre reviews reprinted reinforce the feeling that Levin was wise to abandon the bright lights of Shaftesbury Avenue. Elsewhere good sense and forthrightness often run side by side, along with the usual pobulum of unforced errors. Levin believes, for instance, that Trollope "clocked up an absolutely unvarying 1,000 words on hour - and no messing, for it was not only 1,000

an hour, but a regular two hundred and fifty in each quarter."

The mistakes are irritating rather than important, but they point up the chief limitation of Levin's journalism, the fact that for some years now he has lived in the land of hyperbole. Trollope said only that he wrote 250 words per page and counted the words, but 250 each quarter-hour makes much more exciting reading. Everything for Levin must be the most amazing, extraordinary, subtle and skilful of its kind. Sometimes, remarkably, the thing may be both at once, as when Levin, watching *The Courtier*, "sat in amazement at the prodigiousity of the author's talent... masterly technical skill... impeccable ear... his faultless... his literally incomparable... and" (wait for it) "the emptiness, weightlessness and triviality of his entire play". Whether or not he is handing out fairy gold that changes speedily to hickhuts, Levin writes and speaks always the top of his voice. He uses such weighty quilllets in denouncing the iniquities of Equity or the behaviour of some petty bureaucrat that he has nothing stronger left in his locker when faced with truly major cases of cruelty and oppression, like the imprisonment of Soviet dissidents in what are called with black humour psychiatric hospitals, or the horrors of Cambodia.

I have the impression (a cautious phrase he would never be likely to use) that Bernard Levin was a much more effective political and social journalist twenty years ago than he is today, that he takes less trouble with style and sources than in the past, and is far too often content to fit on bright adjectival wings in the opening sentence and fly off happily to Hyperbole Land. But perhaps this will not last for ever. The introduction to *Speaking Up* tells us of the author's pleasure when choosing pieces for inclusion at discovering that "I am not like man I was in 1970, nor any of the men I have been year by year since." He adds that he will shed more skins year by year. Perhaps, however, the process can be reversed and a *Levin's* Time Machine set in motion, so that his work will reveal the glowing ardent features of a Taper. Such a reversion to the past one would greet with - why not say it? - enthusiasm.

He does not comment at all on the emergence of what can be termed Public Sector Culture during the past twenty years. In which television is playing so critical a part. Part of his problem is that in a book of 300 pages he is trying to cover all aspects of the media, including films, radio and recorded music.

Moreover, valuable space is consumed by twenty-six tables, eighteen figures and two maps. Tunstall may think these devices give his book scientific precision and academic authority, but under close scrutiny they do not amount to much. The whole of page 17 is taken up with a schedule of Tony Benn's Ministerial Activities in 1977. This appeared in the *Guardian* five years ago and really tells us nothing at all about the media, or anything else except Benn's unusual character. Three whole pages of tables are devoted to the public's television preferences - but as long ago as 1958. The list of the twenty-five largest audiences, which takes up most of page 117, dates from 1971, and a lot has changed since then. Tables, such as those dealing with local radio, television and newspapers in the regions, which Tunstall has compiled himself, were scarcely worth publishing. Nor was a table entitled "Public Bodies Involved in British Media Policy", occupying the best part of pages 244-5. His map of ITV's regions is interesting, but far too small to be of much use, and his other map, of local media provision in the Midlands, is minuscule and almost meaningless. Finally, his three pages of figures about the national Sunday papers are dated *Mail on Sunday* and so out of date.

Students will doubtless find much that is new and useful to them in this survey. Tunstall is, often sensible and shrewd, and occasionally interesting. But the claim on the blurb that the book presents more basic information and more original opinions more readily than almost all previous studies of the British media, if true, is a devastating reflection on this branch of literature.

# Have you read the one about

Andrew Hisslop

We cannot bear to roast a book.  
We humbly attack it: we  
try to gently on our lap  
And dust its little jacket.

Christopher Logue believes in pre-emptive strikes. In his anthology of comic verse, *Sweet and Sour* (214pp. Batsford. £6.95. 0 7134 3792 8) he places this quatrain, "The Royal Critic", by Keith Preston on the half-title page as an admission to less charitable commoner readers. Thus warned, the reader turns to the title-page proper, taking in a benign couplet on the way, only to be hit by J. B. Morton's: Come hither, idiot reader,  
And you shall have today  
A pennyworth of poppycock  
To pass the time away.

Having parted with 695 pennies to get thither, "idiot" purchasers might expect more respectful treatment. Logue, however, has certainly not spared them the poppycock (though he does intentionally leave out "often anthologized" pieces). Barely a fly-leaf is left uncoloured by verse. Jaunty lines and thumplog hymns crop up like cockroaches in every nook and cranny - even on the copyright page and at the end of the index. In more conventional places Logue gives one or two gems, some pleasing absurdities and a healthy dollop of badness. What raises the collection to comic, even poetic heights, is the accompanying cartoon by the poignantly eccentric Glaslan. A drawing of his at the end of the book shows a leered Trevor Nunn look-alike talking to a man with a completely blank, impassive face. The caption reads "The Played out Humour-bol" (sic).

The lot of the humorist, U or non-U, can indeed be a sorry one; no more so than at Christmas when the dutifully produced stocking filler is given only a casual passing reference in a review of fifty-odd rival efforts by a syndicate of short of seasonal cheer. No wonder that the distinguished humorist, originally asked by the TLS to assess this present crop of books, fled, muttering something about having to go to Australia, without even having time to take in Donald Carroll's witty but useful offering, *The Best Excuse and How to Make It* (170pp. Methuen. £6.95. 0 413 50480 8): "Any excuse that gets you out of work but also puts you out of work cannot", warns Carroll "be counted an unqualified success." Had he stayed longer, the distinguished humorist might have noticed - perhaps it was because he noticed that he did not stay longer - that this year's batch obviously includes several books which dispense with the individual humorist altogether.

Paul Smith's *The Book of Nasty Legends* (100pp. Routledge. £3.95. 0 7102 0140 0) cuts out the comic writer and taps culture at source; but, as is appropriate for a folklorist's collection of such travelling tales, source includes not just pubs and clubs but other folklorists' collections of such travelling tales whose sources include not just pubs and clubs. His legends are old chestnuts, told as gospel truth, about the friend of a friend whose dog was put to dry on the roof-track... who picked up the superman instead of the lubricant... who thought it was the car of his wife's lover that he had killed with lightning.

Though few of Smith's legends cannot be found in *The Vanishing Hitchhiker* by Jan Browland (150pp. Picador. £1.95. 0 330 269 50 X) (whose original American edition was reissued in the TLS of August 13, 1982) the two books are very different. Browland embeds his legends in folklore analysis. Smith, after a short introduction, just gives us the legends (embellished by Austin cartoons and the odd note) as though they were merely a collection of funny stories. The folklorist turns comic anthologist.

A further exodus of humorists to Australia, however, might be premature. What makes *Legends* compelling is that they are replete with tall tales and are often believed to be true by the tellers. But their presence in Smith's book guarantees (except in cases of extreme silliness) their falsehood; and so will lead to the enjoyment of willing gullibles who delight in innocently uttering "Stone the crows at me" and "bull". And because by legend are untrue, their argument value

must be judged in the same terms as invented comic stories - they are not written with the pacing and punch-lines to produce the best comic effect.

One of Smith's legends with little comic potential is "the one concerning the woman who one day, while spring cleaning, inadvertently vacuumed up the family's pet"; which would be of limited interest, even if true. A casual flip through the *British Medical Journal* of July 5, 1980, for example, will provide one with true stories and legends about vacuum cleaners and men who suffered grievous bodily harm through too physical an emotional attachment to their machines, which are much funnier because the comic potential of the men's invented legends is bolstered by the fact of their attachment: "A 60-year-old man said he was changing the plug of his Hoover Dustette vacuum cleaner in the nude while his wife was out shopping, it 'turned itself on' and caught his...".

Indeed, as Christopher Logue's column in *Private Eye* demonstrates, "true stories" of their own can be funnier than comic legends. And many humorous books depend on "truth" rather than invention as a comic bolster. In particular, following Stephen Pile's success, books of true failures - in every sphere from golf to opera - are very popular. Now we have Richard Gordon's *Great Medical Disasters* (152pp. Hutchinson. £5.95. 0 09 152230 7): during an amputation so enthusiastic a nineteenth-century surgeon cut off his assistant's fingers (both patient and assistant died of gangrene) and sledged a spectator who died of fright; and Stephen Tumim's *Great Legal Disasters* (120pp. Arthur Barker. £4.95. 0 213 16874 X) which reveals that the sixteenth-century cook who poisoned the Bishop of Rochester was executed by boiling (though whether this was a legal success or failure is unclear). There is even with Andrew Mound's *Heretic Hoaxes* (160pp. Macdonald. £5.95. 0 356 09734 X) a book of true stories of falsehood.

There is also a variety of true story which emphasizes rather than conceals its origins in other printed sources: true stories of (true) satire. The latest simple and successful example of this genre, *R.I.P.* by Paul Harris (64pp. Harrow. £4.95. 0 245539 61 6), takes the scissors and paste to the obituary pages: "He had a penchant for playing his fossils close to his chest, so as to discomfit colleagues with belated disclosures".

True stories are funniest when previously unknown. But when a humorist does invent legends which play with true facts prior knowledge is essential. Michael Green even provides a key which explains the necessary facts and literary sources to understand his new volume of "undiscovered letters" of the famous, *Don't Swing from the Balcony, Romeo* (102pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.95. 0 436 18794 9), that rewrites history and historical writing: "Dear Helen, I think it was rather unwise of you to launch 1,000 ships simultaneously yesterday. The harbour is completely blocked... The harbourmaster asked me to tell you not to show your face around there again. Love Menelaus."

When humorists use contemporary rather "dead" history, however, a curious symbiosis sometimes develops between the fact and the fiction. John Wells's and Richard Ingrams's great comic legend, the Denis Thatcher of the "Dear Bill" letters (another collection of which, *My Roundel*, 120pp. André Deutsch. £2.50. 0 233 97607 8), has appeared, would have palled much earlier if Denis himself did not continue to bumble out of Number 10 to meet their fantasy half way. And Ann Barr and Peter York with *The Official Sloane Range Diary* (129pp. Ebury Press. £4.95. 0 85223 296 9) continue to cash in on this discovery that you can at the same time send up and promote a social group so that both its sneered-at members and its sneering critics will buy and be influenced by your books.

Humorists who tire of playing their work off against people or facts can always juggle with the "authority" of the work of other humorists. Thus, in *Wodehouse Nuggets* (237pp. Hutchinson. £6.95. 0 09152480 6), Richard Unwin gives us a selection of P. G. Wodehouse's brilliant conceits. Or, if things get really desperate, the humorist can just juggle with his explanations. Miles Kingston claims in his introduction to the paperback edition of his selection and translation of the incomparable Alphonse Allais' *A Wolf in Frog's Clothing* (159pp. Methuen. £3.50. 0 413 52680 1) that the purpose of its publication was "to give me the chance to rewrite my introduction to the hardback" - which he does.

If you are as clever as Keith Waterhouse, however, you can try and match the "authority" of one of the great English comic legends, *The Diary of a Nobody*. Mrs Pooter's Diary (206pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95. 0 7181 2339 5), not surprisingly, cannot achieve the full lèse-suburban-majesty of the original but it is a brilliant attempt. The book is, of course, best read with the original at hand. At first you treat the Grossmiths' text as the authoritative "truth" and Waterhouse's as playful fantasy, but soon Mrs Pooter's version of events gains authority.

Those who cannot play around with the authority of a comic masterpiece can always have fun with the "text" about which we are all to some extent an - authority - the English language. Douglas Adams and John Lloyd show much wit in *The Meaning of Liff* (191pp. Pan/ Faber and Faber. £1.95. 0 330 28121 6) by using the names of towns to refer to objects, ideas and experiences which previously could not be summed up in a single word. To "ripon" is "to include all the best jokes from the book in the review to make it look as if the critic thought of them himself". And to include the above is to ripon a ripon because, not unnaturally, a critic has already made a joke about quoting the definition of "ripon" in his review. But then, Adams and Lloyd weren't the first to play this particular linguistic game.

Philip Howard is always game for a linguistic laugh: his intention in *A Word in Your Ear* (126pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.50. 0 241 11098 X), however, is not merely to amuse but to educate, for he is someone who is concerned with the way language should impose its authority on us: His halycon (sic) days as a pre-scriber who tried to make us feel pretty fraught (sic) about our misuse of "hopefully" are over, he tells us; he is "the mildest of editors taking up the red biro with distaste"; but he does put us right in the book about, among other things, "baleyon", "fraught" and of course using "(sic)" after a word to abuse other people's misuse of words.

Many examples of the sublime "misuse" of some chosen words can be found in that source of wit and comic creation, Frank Muir's and Denis Norden's *The Complete and Utter "My Word!" Collection* (397pp. Methuen. £6.50. 0 413 52400 9). These pieces are taken from their celebrated radio game in which Norden and Muir are given an "authoritative" line of text to play with such as Thoreau's "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation". They then have to invent a story whose punchline is a similar sounding "perversion" of the original line. Thus Norden ends a tale about marriage and snoring with "As was once observed - more in Thoreau than to Roger - The massive need wives of quiet respiration." These completely brilliant tales show, better than much avant-garde or nouveau roman literature - that formalized linguistic games can be combined with inspired imaginative invention.

Mary Dunn's hilarious *Lady Addie Remembers* (117pp. Robn Clark. £4.95. 0 86072 070 5), which reappears this year, is a welcome return. First published in 1936, it is not a classic in *The Diary of a Nobody* mould; nor is it blessed with the literary greatness of Wodehouse. But its anarchic satire on the pre-war aristocracy is compellingly comic. I strongly recommend readers to share Lady Addie's recollections of such events as meeting her husband when stranded, after a bicycle puncture, "alone and unprotected at least a mile and a half from home with no possible means of regaining its precincts... I quickly drew my machine on to the grass to save the tyre from further friction. My husband has since told me that it was my instinctive thought for my bicycle before myself that first drew him to me." Though the world it mocks has gone, the humor of *Lady Addie Remembers* needs no outside comic support.

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# Verb sap

Richard Boston

JONATHAN GREEN  
Newspeak: A Dictionary of Jargon  
263pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £9.95.  
0 7100 9685 2  
MARTIN H. MANSEY  
A Dictionary of Contemporary Idioms  
219pp. Pan. Paperback. £1.95.  
0 330 26909 7

Years ago I read somewhere about the death of an aged clown. His last words were "Now it's time for the cat scene". While finding the words mysteriously impressive, I wasn't sure what they meant. Did the old chap imagine the Grim Reaper as a pantomime cat he was about to meet, or did he think of death as a transformation in which he would cast off his motley in exchange for a Puss-in-Boots cat suit? The explanation turns out to be better. From *Newspeak* I learn that *cat scene* (theatre/UK) is a pantomime "the last but one scene in which the eaver/nprison transforms into a fairy grotto or woodland dell".

This shows yet again that you can get something from even the worst of books, and *Newspeak* really is very poor. It gets off to a bad start with the title. Having quoted Orwell, who invented the term, Jonathan Green promptly dissociates himself from him: "The new newspeak is of a very different tone from its fictional predecessor." *Newspeak* is a means of thought control. It is not jargon, which Green describes as "the slangs and specific vocabularies of a number of trades, professions, occupations and interests." Here a clear distinction needs to be made between the special vocabulary and usages that members of a group employ when speaking to one another, and the use of such language in order to prevent outsiders from understanding. Much legal and medical language, for example, can be used in both ways.

At the same time there exist technical terms and words for which there is no everyday equivalent. When a printer refers to the material used for making moulds in stereotyping as *flong* he is out (in spite of the rather comic sound of the word) using slang or jargon: the stuff simply is flong. *Flong* is not *Newspeak* and it is not jargon, but like all sorts of other technical terms it finds its way into Green's dictionary where slang, jargon, technical language and professional euphemisms are jumbled together without distinction.

This in itself is no reason why the result should not be a light-weight but mildly entertaining book to dip into. What makes it irritating is its inaccuracy and illiteracy. Uncoded messages are not, as Green says, *sent en plein* but *en clair*; in the 1950s Bratby, Greaves, Smith and Middleditch comprised a school of painters that was called *not kitchen junk* but *kitchen sink*.

The definitions are clumsy. Presumably Green does not think that dice have more odd numbers than even ones, but the description of the gambling term *the hard way* is open to that interpretation. His syntax is terrible: eg. a singular subject governing a verb in the plural. And when Green means eg. he writes *ie. I defy anyone to parse the entry under christmas free effect* which reads: "the theory, in astronomy, that rather than some quasars actually moving, the 'blobs' that some scientists feel prove that movements are actually caused by an internal mechanism that causes them to flash 'on and off'".

Martin H. Manser's *A Dictionary of Contemporary Idioms* is a modest and rather agreeable little book, aimed mostly at speakers of English as a foreign language. It is delightful to think of them arriving on our shores and conveying their feelings after referring to the section headed "Excitement". It will be easy to spot students of Mr Manser's book because they will be exclaiming *By Jiminy! By jingo! By jove! Far out! Gee whizz! Good egg!* and even *Top hole!* On page 2 they will have read that "Little Jimmy's (Johnny's, etc) had an accident" is a euphemistic way of saying that "Jimmy (or another baby's name) has passed water onto the floor". On the same page, under "Afraid" they will find as an example of the use of "I'm afraid" the following: "I've some bad oews. I'm afraid - Gill's had an accident."



